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IRELAND ENEMY OF THE ALLIES?

R. G. ESCOUFLAIRE

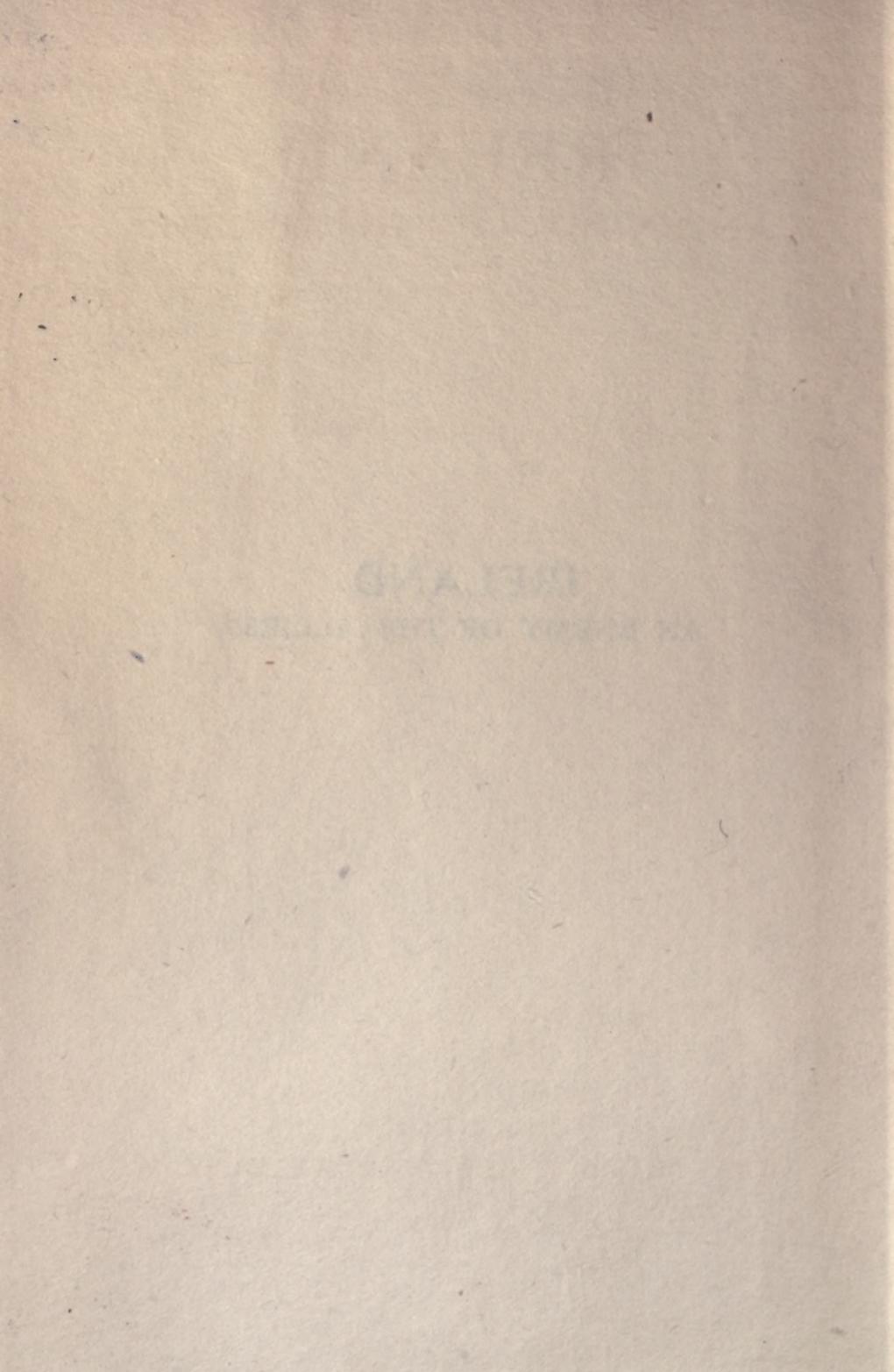


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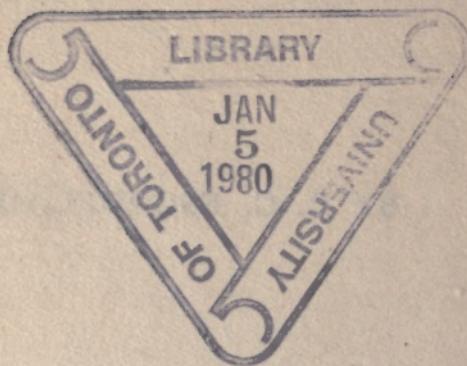
AN ENEMY OF THE ALLIES?

Ireland
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BY R. C. ESCOUFLAIRE

LONDON
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.
1919





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P R E F A C E

THE Irish Question is an international imposture.

Ireland, in order to justify her rebellion and treason, makes out that she is oppressed. Nowadays the oppression of Ireland by England is a myth, and a very feeble one at that. Macaulay said :

“ The Irish, on the other hand, were distinguished by qualities which tend to make men interesting rather than prosperous. They were an ardent and impetuous race, easily moved to tears or to laughter, to fury or to love. Alone among the nations of Northern Europe they had the susceptibility, the vivacity, the natural turn for acting, and rhetoric, which are indigenous on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea.”

Ireland therefore possesses the power of playing upon our emotions as she chooses, but the accusations which she makes are so startling, and so contrary to all we know of English rule in her other dependencies, that we must be careful to verify her statements.

Professor Pearse, one of the ringleaders of the Dublin rebellion, who was shot the following week, stated on the eve of the rising : “ It will

fail in its direct object, but the moral effect before the whole world will be immense, and form a glorious chapter in Irish history.” The Professor believed that the world was very simple-minded, easily taken in by resounding phrases and theatrical poses. Possibly he was not mistaken. We need not mock, it was more successful than we realise.

Ireland has always harped upon this note with great effect. How many Frenchmen and Americans have been caught in the snare? Yet what Pearse was asking those rebels to do was nothing less than to stab us in the back when our fate was in the balance at Verdun, and when our soldiers were writing in their blood at Vaux and Douaumont the most heroic page in the history of France. It were well, then, if his scheme should not reap all the success which he anticipated.

The rebellion was followed by punishment; mercy was shown to the rank and file, the ring-leaders were executed, and Ireland wailed with grief and decorated their graves with flowers. George Bernard Shaw, an Irishman who owes his reputation as a humorist to the amusing paradoxes of his race, dared to write: “Nothing in heaven or earth can prevent the men shot taking their place beside Emmett and the Manchester martyrs in Ireland, and beside the heroes of Poland and Serbia or Belgium in Europe.” This comparison is an insult to noble little countries, and the reason of this these pages will endeavour to show.

There is an amusing side to this, that is, to see

the German press waxing indignant at the destruction of a small nation, and Austria—save the mark—applauding a national revolt.

We should do well to be very cautious of the word Nationalism; it covers such a multitude of artificial claims. In its name we have Egyptian “patriots” in the pay of the wire-pullers of the Committee of Union and Progress—and such progress!—who want to purge their country of Western conceptions and restore the benefits of Ottoman Kultur. Of late years, too, we have had Hindu nationalists demanding Home Rule for that immense peninsula with its hundred different races. Who are they? Young Bengali lawyers without a mandate, claiming to represent 200,000,000 illiterate and apathetic peasants, without counting 100,000,000 Mohammedans who loathe them, and are quite satisfied with English rule, and would not tolerate a change. When shall we do justice to these ill-timed jests?

It is certain that before the war opinion in Latin countries inclined towards the small complaining nation, not going very deeply into the matter, as usual, but applauding these tirades, and *a priori* suspecting England, the silent, who is such a bad defender of her own cause. An Englishman always believes that his cause is perfectly plain and needs no comment.

“Will you defend yourself?” says Meredith’s Princess Ottilia to her friend, after listening to the diatribe of a pretentious Boche.

"Well, no, frankly, I will not. The proper defence for a nation is its history."¹

No doubt, but it is not known to everybody. By the time an Englishman makes up his mind to reply to his accusers he has generally ten or twenty years of calumny to contend with, and some of the dirt will stick.

It is no easy matter to destroy a legend, and if the Irish Celts had not given us such stinging blows during the war we should probably have gone on for a long time believing them to be inoffensive and unfortunate victims. They may be humorists, but they overestimate our credulity. They ask for applause. If their recent attitude, by directing all eyes towards them and attracting closer observation, ends by confounding them, and bringing them in more kicks than halfpence, and if they are on the way to lose their last and best friend, America, they have no one to blame but themselves. This frightful war will have had one good result; it will have taught us to recognise our friends and know our enemies.

There is no doubt that the verdict will be a severe one, and unfortunately many good and noble men will suffer from this national crime; among them will be those Irishmen who recognised and fulfilled their duty—and let me say at once that there are many such, several hundred thousand. Mercifully there are still many sound

¹ *The Adventures of Harry Richmond*, chapter xxviii.

hearts in Ireland, and this indictment is not directed against them.

We shall denounce the clergy who have gone astray, but we shall be most careful to exclude the English Roman Catholics, both priests and faithful, whose conduct during the last four years has been irreproachable in act and word. They do not condone the Irish bishops; on the contrary, they suffer through being compromised by their folly.

We shall have hard words for Irish politicians, but we shall not forget that, in every party, in Ireland as elsewhere, there are men of good faith and perfect loyalty.

But besides them, and in spite of all these reservations, these distressing facts remain—the falling-away of a nation, the hostility of a people in whose generosity we believed, the lying pretexts with which we were to be deceived. All this we shall try to describe and explain.

Need I say that the writer is in no man's pay? Some will insinuate that he is, in the bewilderment of seeing their Anglophobe prejudices thus clearly and categorically exposed.

Is this work, then, not impartial? Let us understand one another. Impartial in its point of departure certainly; but frankly partial in its conclusions. After I had examined this question, weighed words and deeds in the balance, I was perforce obliged to take sides. To try to please everybody and never ruffle preconceived ideas is not always the way to find out the truth.

On this subject I shared the illusions—and the ignorances—of almost all my fellow-countrymen, until one day an Irish-American friend, who died an heroic death eight years ago as one of the pioneers of aviation, handed me Sir Horace Plunkett's *Ireland in the New Century*, and warned me that it contained many surprises for me. These were so great that I was fired with the desire to go into the matter more deeply, and to complete the investigation by the study of men and books—past and present. The first result of this was a contemporary study of the social and political condition of Ireland in 1909.

Having since retained, needless to say, the deepest interest in this question, and followed from day to day, at the very heart of events, the incidents of this endless quarrel, I was often distressed to see the way the French public and press either attributed the blame and responsibility wrongly, or else, amazed at Ireland's misguided folly, gave up trying to understand the business, and relegated it to the mysteries of censored war-news.

Unfortunately even those who were sent to Dublin on missions of inquiry or propaganda were sometimes taken in by the plausible speeches of the local orators. Doubtless Froude's history would be denounced to them, Froude, who falsified his story by literature and prejudice, and, instead of showing Ireland in her true colours, crowned her with the palms of injured innocence. Then the more accurate and honest work of Lecky would

be shown to them. Lecky was the great historian of eighteenth-century Ireland, an epoch during which Ireland played indubitably an heroic part. But were they told that Lecky, in the face of contemporary events, became the opponent of Home Rule just as Froude had been ?

Were our friends thoroughly conversant with all the complex facts of the question ? I know that some of them, unfortunately, returned having formed hasty and ill-considered judgments, actuated more by sentiment than reason. This book has been written in the humble hope of enlightening them a little.

PARIS,

August 15th, 1918.

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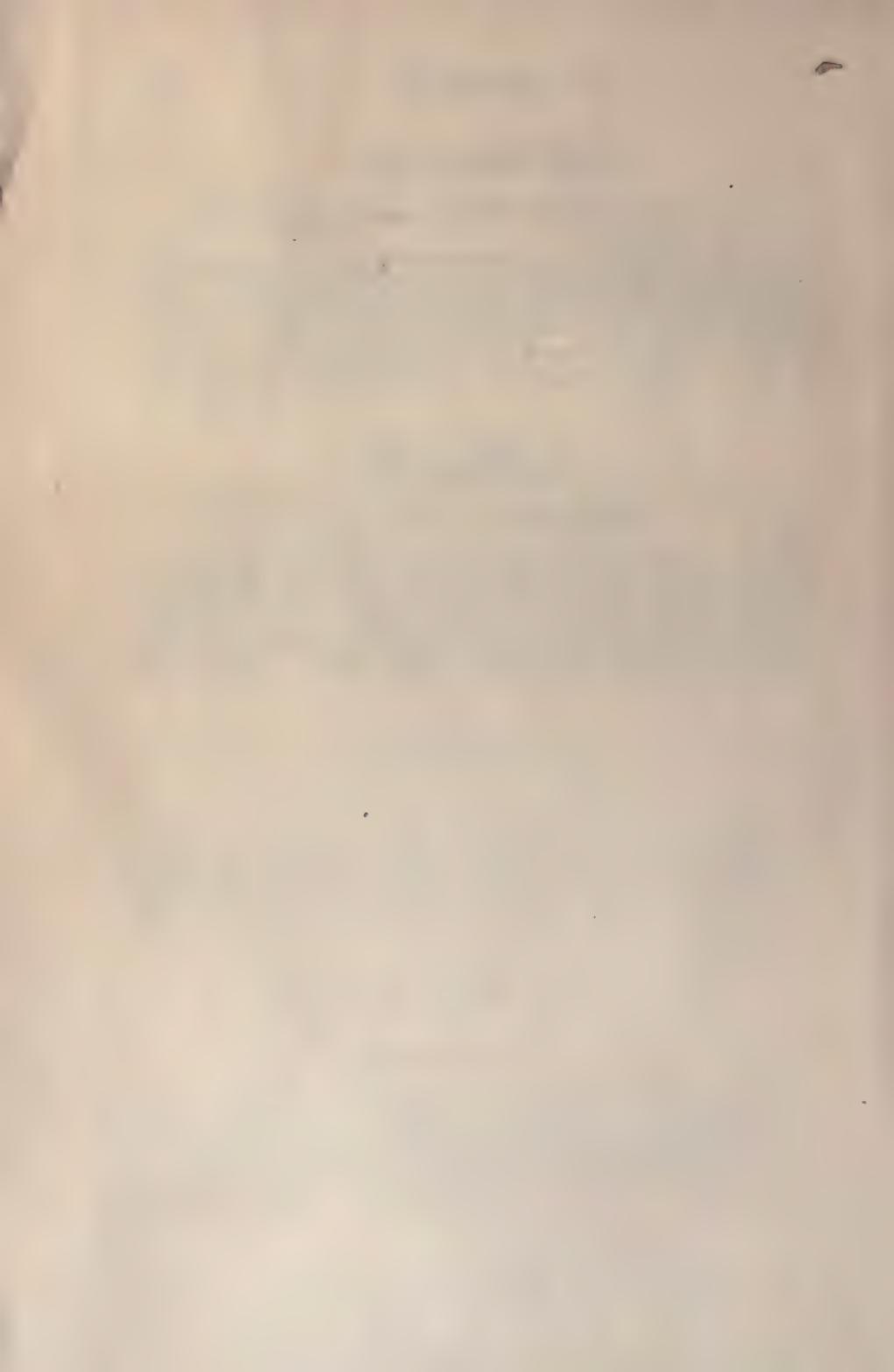
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IRELAND—AN ENEMY OF THE ALLIES?

CHAPTER I

THE IRISH ENIGMA

WHY is Ireland not on our side? Why should this little country, athirst for independence, reserve her sympathy for predatory Germany? Moreover, she wants us to take her part; can we do so?

Ireland has not the excuse that she did not understand the facts of the case. She could read in the original all the Foreign Office documents, Sir Edward Grey's dispatches—never was diplomacy more frank and outspoken, more loyal or more damaging in its obvious good faith. Ireland had to choose between that and the outrageous depravity, the disgusting cynicism, of the Wilhelmstrasse. She chose ill. She is always accusing her “stepmother” of breaking this promise or that. But in this case it was Germany who dis honoured her oaths, and England who risked the whole of her Empire to keep her sworn faith.

And Ireland stood aloof and was critical—but of England only. “Can England’s motives ever be pure ? ” she mutters.

War broke out.

On August 1st, 1914, Ireland was on the verge of civil war, for there were two Irelands : one, consisting of three-quarters of the island, had just obtained its charter of autonomy, the Home Rule Act, which only needed the royal signature. The other part, that of the Ulster Protestants in the north-east, had sworn a solemn covenant two years before, that it would not submit to this law ; in it, Ulster read her death-warrant, and that literally. She was ready for resistance ; for months she had been arming and drilling and having military manœuvres with great seriousness. She was prepared for any sacrifice in order to keep her place in the Empire, in spite of the Imperial Parliament. Her army, consisting of 100,000 picked volunteers, had just been reviewed by its leader, Carson.

Everything was ready and the die was cast. These men expected no quarter from the Irish Nationalists, to whom they had been delivered by the party bargains of the English Radicals ; they were determined to sell their liberties dearly.

No less determination was shown by the opposing side. The Nationalists had also raised an army ; they had the same number of volunteers, but far less well armed ; but, to make up for this, it is true, they had the support of the Imperial Government

and Parliament. Ulster had no one to rely upon but herself.

The forces of Redmond and Carson are face to face. A few days later blood will flow. Yes, but in another theatre and in vaster floods. The trumpet sounds another blast, another call to arms. A truce to childish games, to the miniature war of Irish factions. The world is bowed under a greater anguish, and on the lurid horizon arise the symbols of Right, Justice, Liberty, Respect for Treaties, Defence of the Weak. Fighting for these on the plains of Belgium, the Irish Volunteers, Catholic and Protestant, would not betray their own cause. Are these not the very principles which they invoke daily against one another?

Their leaders realised this. Carson and Redmond instantly gave orders to their partisans to suspend hostilities, and give their services to the greater cause, the cause which embraced theirs. Carson sent his men "to defend the Empire," that was all; Redmond made reservations, he offered his brigades "to defend the shores of Ireland." But that was better than nothing. What response was there? Ulstermen could not hesitate. They had armed themselves in order to preserve by force their union with the Empire, and the Empire asked of them a greater sacrifice, and they did not hesitate. They were influenced by three incentives: fear of oppression by a Catholic majority; traditional hatred of those who were to become their masters—selfish incentives if you

like ; sincere devotion to the Empire—which meant putting their own grievances on one side, and giving up all safeguards, sending their sons to be massacred in Europe, and finding themselves afterwards disarmed in the hour of their own peril. Their devotion won the day, but we must remember the alternative, for we owe Ulster a debt of honour for her choice.

And what of the rest of Ireland ? I wish I could say that she did not hesitate either. But it would be false. When, in September 1914, John Redmond, their leader at that time, great-hearted and clear-sighted, pointed out their duty, a certain number of National Volunteers answered the call. But the others, the majority, waited.

Yet the first victim to protect was Belgium, innocent, without a doubt, chivalrous, heroic and Catholic too, which is an important point to an Irishman. Yet Ireland made no move.

A month later we are no longer dealing with iniquitous diplomacy, but with crimes which disgust the basest minds ; the whole world had just heard of the atrocities of Aerschot and Dinant. Louvain was in ashes, its priests taken to Germany in cattle trucks or massacred on the Brussels road. Many Irish priests had been educated at the University of Louvain, hundreds of Belgian priests and nuns had arrived in Ireland, fleeing from violation and murder, telling of their tortures, and crying for vengeance. Will Ireland rise ? Yes, but not as you would expect.

All the "National Volunteers" who had sulked during their leader's appeal made up their minds at last; they denied Redmond and went to swell a new army, the "Irish Volunteers," opposed alike to Redmond, England, and the Allies. In the first month of the war the German press informed us that the Irish had their ambassador at the court of Potsdam—no less a person than Sir Roger Casement!¹

In December a tragic voice was heard, crying aloud for vengeance; Cardinal Mercier, whom young Irish priests had known and revered at the School of Philosophy in Louvain, solemnly affirmed the barbarism, the revolting cruelty of the invader, the ignominies inflicted upon the priests and nuns of Belgium.

Was that enough to convince the Irish clergy? On the contrary, several of the Bishops attacked England, our ally, with redoubled vituperation. Other things hardly interested them.

In 1915 the German atrocities came nearer home. On a cold spring morning, poor, drenched, miserable, exhausted creatures were landed on the Irish coast, while not far off the bodies of children were thrown up by the tide. A wave of horror swept over the world; the *Lusitania* had been torpedoed. Was Ireland roused?—not a bit of it.

Civilised men howled execration, the hateful Boche from Berlin, New York, and Madrid replied

¹ Casement's "mission" was mentioned in German newspapers found in Belgium as early as August 25th, 1914.

with satanic laughter. This is only the beginning, it seems ; the submarine has shown what it can do, we shall see more of its handiwork. *Vae victis !* the wrath of Germany is terrible. This is by no means displeasing to some of the Irish, since they are now the allies of Germany.

In the outrages which the Bernstorff gang perpetrated in New York, you will often find Irishmen in very sinister company. But it does not seem to worry them.

Little by little, as Germany developed her submarine campaign, a rumour spread ; the most profitable coups always seemed to come off somewhere near Ireland. Would not her lonely, deserted shores, with myriads of inlets, creeks, and reefs, mysterious caves and outlying islands, make admirable bases for supplying the pirates ? Was this hateful suspicion far-fetched ? Many Irishmen did not appear to resent it. Are we not at war, and is not England the enemy ?

Gradually the rumour began to crystallise. Here a chatterbox could not hold his tongue, there a patriot bragged too loud ; but still there was not enough evidence for a magistrate to convict. It took two years to find the proof ; it was forthcoming at the rebellion in 1916, much to the confusion of the incredulous, and at the time of Casement's trial. Rebel Ireland had official dealings with Admiral Tirpitz's pirates.

During the following months the contrasts which have been a salient feature of Irish history for the

last twenty-five years became still more accentuated; on the one hand the English governors doing their utmost to cajole and satisfy Ireland, on the other every effort being made to discourage them. Elsewhere I have emphasised this attitude; the war in no way altered it.

Locked in a struggle which became ever more deadly, pitted against a foe more dangerous than she had foreseen, Great Britain gave up her comforts, her pleasures, habits, and cherished traditions. The all-powerful Trade Unions *imperium in imperio* were asked to suspend their privileges. She sacrificed all her liberties by the Defence of the Realm Act, of which one clause, the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, will show the significance. Hundreds of minute regulations and burdensome taxes created havoc in every sphere, in commerce, industry, agriculture, amusements, drink, restaurants, railway journeys, rationing, requisitions, etc. And to almost every regulation, however necessary and far-reaching, would be appended a clause or similar amendment, "this regulation does not apply to Ireland."

The result was what might have been expected (one need only read a few pages of the history of Ireland to guess what would happen): the more concessions were made, the greater grew the rebel army; the more favours Redmond obtained for Ireland, the less gratitude she showed, and the more she repudiated him. Redmond, poor man, who had once succeeded to Parnell's prestige,

and had led the Nationalist party for a quarter of a century, was now a king without a kingdom. He ruined himself on that day when he dared to say to his fellow-countrymen, "England needs your help, give it to her." His convictions as to the origin of and responsibility for the war never varied ; his brother, William Redmond, M.P., died a noble death at the head of an Irish battalion, and his son fought on our side.

But the National Volunteers of 1914 did not follow them ; they went over to the opposite camp and became the "Irish Volunteers" of Sinn Fein who inaugurated the rebellion of 1916.

This metamorphosis did not take place in a day. The Government was warned twenty times, by the police, by questions in the House, by the press, and by the magistrates, of the plot which was being hatched and of the growth of extremist views in Ireland. But the Government maintained its usual deliberate lofty serenity ; its only Irish policy was *laissez-faire*. At the slightest sign of trouble it turned to the Nationalist politicians, its allies, and the official representatives of Ireland. They were most optimistic. "Never fear, trust Ireland, give her her head, do not irritate her, study her psychology, sympathise with her, you will see all will be well." They forgot that their constituents were becoming less and less disposed to endorse their promises.

Towards the end of 1915 a Belgian Recruiting Commission visited Dublin, in order to enrol

several categories of refugees. The Lord Mayor gave them a kindly reception at the Mansion House, speeches of mutual admiration were exchanged, unimpeachable sentiments, after the manner of public officials and reporters. But in private our friends received curious impressions of their visit, and were able to see how the land lay. It was quietly suggested to them that they should be broadminded and not worry the refugees too much, nor pull the chestnuts out of the fire for the old ogress over the way. Then followed whispered confidences about the said ogress—Caillaux's methods, in short.

According to the laws of hospitality no protests nor expressions of surprise could be made; the puzzled visitors had happened upon a state of mind of which they had had no warning. If this were the attitude of the well-disposed Irish, to whom Mr. Asquith at Westminster gave testimonials for their civic virtue and their loyalty, what must be the attitude of the masses of whom Redmond was no longer the leader?

One of our friends had an inkling the following day. Some English officers invited him to go for a motor run into the beautiful Irish countryside. Before they had gone far they came upon a strange spectacle—crowds of young fellows, thousands of them wearing military caps or soft felts; words of command; distant rifle shots; Indian files going along the hedgerows; patrols signalling on the crests of the hills; motor-cyclist scouts.

" What's all this ? "

" Oh, nothing—a Sinn Fein field-day."

" In broad daylight ? So near Dublin ? Is the Government not alarmed ? "

Silence on the part of the English officers, who shrugged their shoulders and smiled uneasily.

" You had better ask Mr. Birrell or Lord Wimborne ; they will give you reassuring explanations."

The crisis reached its height in 1916. After having enrolled 3,000,000 volunteers, Great Britain asked her sons to make a supreme effort—conscription. The more desperate the struggle, the more inexorable became the need for it. Every day her resolution was strengthened by some fresh horror ; *delenda est Carthago*. Parliament consented, the nation submitted, and conscription was passed.

But the Government made a fatal mistake, having forgotten everything, yet learnt nothing. As though all the recent concessions to Ireland had not failed in their aim and left her more intractable and more hostile, this final favour was granted her, she was exempted from conscription. A little outcry was enough for John Redmond, alarmed at the disappearance of his popularity, to veto that.

Redmond and his friends added promises to their threats :

" Conscription will exasperate Ireland, you will need more soldiers to enforce it than you will ever raise from Irish conscripts. Try to understand

Ireland, O clumsy Saxons! Show trust and sympathy, and you will get far more. Let us manage her, do not annoy her, we will speak to her—she has a generous soul and will understand."

Mr. Redmond did his best in all good faith. The Viceroy asked for a minimum of a thousand recruits a week, so that he might say that Ireland had done her duty as the sister island.

Redmond had reckoned without his host; not only had everybody quite made up their mind to laugh at him behind his back, but Dr. O'Dwyer, the notorious Bishop of Limerick, went farther and forbade his flock to serve under the hereditary enemy, recalling the fact that the Vatican, the mouthpiece of divine wisdom, had remained neutral during this worldly conflict. In his Pastoral the Bishop grew bolder; he not only abused England only, but every member of our diabolical alliance; Serbia was a criminal and we were every one of us scoundrels. Poor Serbia, writhing in agony, Monsignor O'Dwyer thanks Heaven for having punished you. . . . It will be as well to quote him fully:

"Then see the case of the small nationalities on whose behalf many people have believed that the war is being waged.

"What good has it done for them? What part have they played in it except that of cat's paws for the larger nations that used them? Belgium delayed the German advance for two weeks and gave time to the English and French armies to

rally. For her pains she has been conquered and ruined. Servia began the war by an atrocious crime, and as reparation for it might weaken Russia's aims in the Balkans she was encouraged to resist. She, too, has played her temporary rôle and has followed in the wake of Belgium. Montenegro is the next to go ; and it would seem that the great belligerent nations look to themselves only, and use their weaker neighbours for their own purposes.

" This war is not waged by any of the Great Powers as a quixotic enterprise for lofty ideals. ' Small nationalities ' and other such sentimental pretexts are good enough for platform addresses to an imaginative but uninformed people, but they do not reveal the true inwardness of this war.

" All the belligerents have had practical and substantial aims in view. France wants her lost provinces of Alsace and Lorraine ; Russia wants Constantinople ; England wants the undisputed supremacy of the sea and riddance from German commercial rivalry ; Austria wants domination in the Balkans and an outlet in the Ægean ; Italy wants Trieste and what is called *Italia Irredenta* ; Germany wants a colonial empire and a powerful navy ; and all these Powers have formed alliances and laid their plans many a day, simply for the realisation of their respective purposes.

" They planned and schemed solely for the sake of power and material gain. All the talk about righteousness is simply the cloak for ambition, and the worst of it is that some of the belligerents have gone on repeating the profession of their disinterestedness until they have come to believe it themselves.

"Truth, and right, and justice have had very little to say to this war, which is an outbreak of materialism and irreligion. The peoples did not want this war ; there is no hatred of one another amongst them ; but the governing cliques in each country have led or driven them like sheep to the slaughter. God has been ignored ; His law has been put aside ; Christianity is not allowed to govern the relations of nations. And now the retribution is on them all, the fair dreams of victory and expanded empire and increased wealth and prosperity with which they set out have vanished long ago, and there is not a Government amongst them but is trembling for the day when it shall have to answer for its stewardship to its own people."

This is the stuff which was preached from Irish pulpits during the battle of Verdun. Such a document might well be considered seditious, and His Majesty's Government might have recalled the Bishop to his senses. But on this point Ireland has always taken a firm stand. "If you touch our holy prelates we will have civil war instantly." As usual the Government gave in, in order to afford no ground for accusations of tyranny nor occasions for calumny. So successful was this move that on April 7th, 1916, Mr. Sheehy Skeffington, an Irishman, whose evidence is valuable, wrote, "Sinn Fein (the army in the pay of the Wilhelmstrasse) is at present enrolling more than a thousand volunteers a week—the exact figure which Lord Wimborne asked for, for the Imperial Army."

In 1916 I travelled from London to Paris with a young Australian lieutenant, who had just lost an arm near Albert, and had spent a month of convalescence with an uncle, a farmer in Ireland. He told me that his host had welcomed him most kindly and admired him, but had always seemed to be keeping something back. At last, when he said good-bye to him and sent affectionate messages to his parents in Melbourne, he unburdened himself. "You are a fine boy, I like you, but take *that* off." *That* was the khaki tunic, the "badge of slavery." Since then I have met others who have told me of similar efforts at "conversion."

We are told of persecutions in Ireland, of humiliations, of slavery. Judge for yourself. The Englishman has a broad back.

That is why English widows—there are legions of them to-day—smile bitterly when they think of the young men in the distressful island, and why the English Tommies frown when you mention the "warm-hearted Celts." You can understand the amazement of the American sailors who landed at Queenstown, their base, in 1917, primed with the Anglophobe legends of the Fenians of their own country, and found the place thronged with lusty sneering young men. You can understand above all that Ulster, threatened with union with these people, and obliged to submit to them, does not see any prospect of a happy future. This last fatal weakness of the Asquith Cabinet soon produced the usual consequences: shouts of

triumph from the leagues, glorying in a victory won as they thought by intimidation, followed by immensely increased influence. It was only logical. Germany had the sense to make the most of it. When she thought the moment had come for direct intervention, her instrument properly adjusted, the "Irish Volunteers" sufficiently numerous and organised, she took them seriously and gave them a place of honour in her strategy.

Just at that time, in the spring of 1916, her plans were vast; formidable blows were to be directed against Verdun; a bold sortie was intended to pierce Jellicoe's line; finally a well-organised insurrection in Ireland, shorn of troops—with small chance of ultimate success no doubt, but sufficient at all events to oblige England to immobilise there a strong force instead of sending it to the help of Verdun. Sad to say, Ireland consented to play this part.

You all know what happened: the plan was checkmated and put down. Unfortunately, though the Irish patriots burned their fingers, the German scheme succeeded up to a point; in a few days 50,000 men had to be sent to Dublin, and to reinforce the permanent garrisons throughout the island. They are still there, to the joy of our enemies and to our detriment.

If the rebellion of 1916 were the chief feature in our picture of Ireland during the Great War, we could now stop. But to do so would be to deprive ourselves of the most instructive lessons of

the episode, of those which alone can throw a little light upon the tangled and paradoxical history of the distressful country.

I may be reproached for having been unjust in speaking thus of "Ireland" as a whole without qualifications. I have paid to Ulster the homage due to her, and also to those Nationalist Volunteers who followed Redmond and came to die for us. But during the first year of the war even the mass of the population was not open too much to criticism. Its attitude was indifferent, but not yet hostile. Suspicious acts or words were at most the work of agitators and of some of the leagues, not enough to accuse "Ireland" of them.

What is more serious is that as time went on, the more the world was horrified by German crimes, the more that Irish minority which was ready to strike us in the back became the majority. The fatal change has been constant, continuous, irresistible. We shall soon see what excuses were made for her.

When the insurrection broke out in April 1916, most Irishmen were much surprised at it, and even went so far as to deplore it. Two months later, they were full of admiration and indulgence for the unfortunate rebels, and from that moment the Sinn Fein party recruits more men than it can absorb, proclaims its schemes without the smallest concealment, gets popular support everywhere, and in the by-elections wins all the seats of the

orthodox Nationalist members—so much so that several of the latter become turncoats and incline towards those who have the upper hand. This became so pronounced that in 1917 and in 1918 Mr. Lloyd-George's Cabinet feared fresh risings, and it was only due to their vigilance, firmness, and precautions that we were spared them.

In spite of all, we must have no illusions on the matter; the situation is still alarming, Sinn Fein is making headway. Germany has too good a trump card not to try to play it again. The deserted shore of the west coast affords ample shelter for submarines, and who knows when the next explosion will startle us?

As the European drama became more alarming, and the barbarian wallowed in the blood of his mutilated victim, and the British Empire, body and soul, and particularly soul, became indispensable to the cause of Right, the more misguided and irrational did Ireland become.

Armenia had been exterminated by a slow and hideous martyrdom. Serbia had paid the penalty of her heroism, stabbed in the back. Who would not pity them? The horrors of the prison camps became gradually known, and there were Irishmen among the prisoners in Germany. As to Belgium—if the great Cardinal's evidence were not sufficient, we now have the revelations of Lord Bryce's Commission. Lord Bryce is one of Ireland's staunchest friends, the first Liberal Secretary, and, so far as I know, Ireland has never doubted Lord Bryce.

All the Colonies, where Irishmen are so numerous and powerful, understood their duty and adopted our cause of their own free will. England allows her Dominions as much freedom as an English mother does her daughters. Were they likely to have yielded to a passing passion, and acted unreasonably? Events did not make them change their mind; far from it.

What of the United States—"New Ireland," whence the so-called martyred island was wont to draw all the money and moral support for her conspiracies? The United States took three years to take up the cudgels, smothering their wrath, and giving credence to the lies of the Boche, whether obvious or subtle ones. In the end they were obliged to submit to reality, and it appears that the Irish-Americans themselves were on our side. Two years have passed since the dramatic conversion of the most impartial of neutral democracies. Has Ireland followed the example? Not at all. Is she likely to do so? There is no sign of it; she is thinking of other matters.

The Irish are by way of being a warm-hearted people, sentimental, champions of the ideal as against the abject materialism of the Saxons. Why at every fresh crime on the part of Germany did Ireland draw a little nearer to her?

A magic word reached her, the cry of a Bavarian poet, Lissauer's Hymn of Hate, which is her religion too, an anathema bequeathed to her by her ancestors, and which the last Irishman

will shout to his dying day. “ Wir hassen dich, England ! ”

Then for the first time during the war Ireland was roused. She remembered her old proverb, “ England’s difficulty, Ireland’s opportunity.” She forgot all the rest—the stains on the hands which were held out to her, the blood of women and the scattered brains of children, orgies followed by massacres. Disgust was swallowed up in hatred. In a world united by the holy war this hatred could find but one ally, Germany, and did not even blush at this alliance.

You will not forget this, will you, when you are told—as you will be—that Ulster alone is to blame, by refusing to join hands with Roman Catholic Ireland ? You would do well to remember that Ulster has good reasons.

Are not these aberrations very extraordinary ? It remains to be seen how matters came to this pass. The Irishman has an inexhaustible battery of excuses ; to enumerate them all would need volumes. We shall endeavour to collate the better known, to ascertain the respective share of facts and of psychology, and to get them into some better order than Hibernians can manage to do in their flow of turgid eloquence. There are all manner of excuses, historical, religious, economic, and sentimental, and all have the same conclusion. Ireland is a “ little bit of heaven,” as the popular song says, peopled with angels, of course, whose downfall has been planned by the Powers of Hell.

The most serious aspects, so far as we are concerned, are the contemporary ones, for Ireland, feeling in spite of her subterfuges that she was on the horns of a disagreeable dilemma, has at last defied all common sense and taken her stand against us, just as Lenin and Trotsky have done ; she has tried to deny the purity of our intentions and our sincerity when war broke out. It is time, so it seems to me, to put a stop to it, and speak frankly to her. Father O'Flanagan said in January 1916 : "Ireland should become an independent country in alliance with Germany."

She wanted to be summoned to the Peace Conference as a sovereign nation, and who knows ? England may be broad-minded enough to make some such concession.

The time has come to know on which side she is going to stand, and, before receiving her complaints or judging of her grievances, to have at least some idea what foundation there is for them.

CHAPTER II

SOME ANCIENT HISTORY

WHEN we say "that is ancient history" we mean that a thing has lost much of its importance. In Ireland you mean the opposite. If you drive along a pretty valley in one of those absurd vehicles where you sit sideways with your feet hanging over the wheels, as if you were riding a Spanish mule, and begin to talk to the jarvey : "Whose land is that ?" "That, your Honour, belongs to the Macdiarmids." You will be much astonished when you spend the evening with the village priest to learn that the aforesaid Macdiarmids had disappeared from the neighbourhood three hundred and fifty years previously, and that the land belongs to Lord So-and-so.

When the English try to make friends and say : "We confess all our mistakes, and will forget all yours. We will help you, and what fine results we shall have when we work together!" it is the same thing. The Irishman does not understand. He lives in another age, and forgets nothing. Before any reconciliation he wants reparation, and it would not be so exorbitant if he did not insist on reparation for damage done in 1615 or 1649.

You will allow that the claim takes some swallowing.

It is true that we insisted that Germany should restore Belgium before we made peace with her. But if Europe had to liquidate to-morrow all its horrors of the past, from Charles the Bold to the Duke of Alva ; from the Sicilian Vespers to the Palatinate—great heavens ! when would peace be signed. Roughly speaking, that is what Ireland is asking. If you think that I am exaggerating, open an American newspaper of January 1918. In it you will find an account of some Irish committee offering a statuette of Robert Emmett to President Wilson ; Emmett was an unfortunate rebel, implicated in the assassination of the Lord Chief Justice of Ireland and executed in 1803. In Ireland they are always talking of the past, and every year they celebrate in all seriousness the anniversary of a defeat of the Danes at Clontarf in 1014.

“ If you only knew how we had suffered ! ” Irishmen are for ever saying. “ We ? You mean your great-great-grandfathers, for you seem to me to be fairly flourishing. But still if you are so anxious to do so, let us stir the ashes.”

In Ireland in the Middle Ages, there were, besides the innumerable monks, who gave it the title of “ Island of Saints,” swarms of bards, some of them attached to the mansion of some clan or chief ; others who wandered about the

country with the right of asking for food and shelter wherever they pleased, descended from a druidical hierarchy, and enjoying privileges consecrated by custom. They were so numerous that they formed one-third of all the free men ; they were sometimes amusing, but idle and noisy, poets more or less, but burdensome parasites above all. Those whose hospitality or patience was not up to their standard were given cause to repent ; these rustic minstrels did not spare them.

One of the kings wanted to be rid of them and banish them. Saint Columba took up their cause, and contrived to turn them into schoolmasters, giving instruction gratis to all, which evidently turned the country into a nursery of scholars. This era produced the most ancient Western epic, “*Hibernicus Exul*,” in honour of Charles the Great, philosophers like Scotus Erigena, and sent to Gaul and Germany hordes of monks before the days of St. Boniface.

On the other hand, these bards, transformed into teachers, poets, and chroniclers, had a disastrous influence on their country. They kept up the spirit of old times, and all the vices of their foundation ; if they sang of saints and heroes, it was to travesty them by over-emphasis, flattery, fabulous exaggeration. Divided into “*suide*,” who were compilers of pedigrees and genealogical tables, and “*filid*” minstrels, exciting the vanity and flattering the vices of their patrons, all achieved

the same result—that of perpetuating the pride of the chieftains and clan rivalry.

Now, clan spirit is one form of that feudalism which our great nations had to outgrow before they could arrive at their modern social and political order; Ireland, to her misfortune, could not do it in the specified time. At the time when great national unities were being consolidated, she who could have realised herself so easily, dallied too long with the petty quarrels of princelements and tribes. She was not very far behind us, but she has never been able to make up lost time.

The bards whose business it was to write the national chronicle outbid one another in stories of the clans. The chroniclers who had to draw from this source found nothing but fables and rubbish. In spite of the astonishing number of documents, few histories have been more obscure or misleading.

Our jarvey was satisfied with going back three or four centuries, but the “*súide*” have gone one better. Their Irish legend takes race and dynasty back to Noah, no less, with disconcerting accuracy! Neither the maze of prehistoric times nor flights of fancy have any terrors for Celts!

Here is another example less excusable because more recent, and even contemporary with the chroniclers. In the ninth century Norwegian pirates came to ravage the shores of Ireland, and, needless to say, their methods were not gentle. Thereupon there arose the legend of a personage in whom every cruelty was incarnate: Turgesius

the Viking. An Irish manuscript overwhelms him with detail, then the story is taken up and enlivened by Gerald of Cambrai and the monk Jocelyn ; this is the first specimen of those national complaints, in which Ireland figures perpetually as the persecuted victim, and of which the rest of her history is simply another edition.

Now, no research has ever been able to prove that Turgesius ever existed ! There is no trace of him in any other chronicle nor in Scandinavian Sagas. But, on the other hand, there was at that time in Ireland, beside the usual endemic war of clans, never very humane, one Fedlimid, King of Munster and Bishop of Cashel, who, in order to become supreme king over the whole island, put it to fire and sword, devastating and pillaging with extreme ferocity. At last it was realised that the best part of the atrocities ascribed to the mythical invader Turgesius bore a remarkable resemblance to those of Fedlimid, whose praises were still being sung by his bards and chroniclers. This is the first of the "persecutions" of Ireland—a sorry precedent for the veracity of narratives to come !

The Middle Ages pass, and gradually we approach the fatal day when the Irish lose their independence for good and all—if independence means killing one another with great perseverance !

Up to 1150 the Norman kings who had been in Great Britain for nearly a century had not yet cast longing eyes upon Ireland.

In 1155 Pope Adrian, by his bull "Laudabiliter," swept away their scruples.

"There is no doubt that Ireland and all the islands which have known the light of Christ, the Sun of justice, and have received the teachings of the Christian faith, belong legitimately to St. Peter and to the Holy Roman Church. Knowing that you will assist by your power the welfare of religion and the Church, we grant you the government, reserving all our ecclesiastical rights, and on condition that you pay to St. Peter for each hearth one penny a year."

According to the law of that day, the title is in order, and for good Irish Catholics it is a bitter commentary on the past which they love so well. King Henry, who had much to do in France, did no more than record the grant.

In 1156, a somewhat unpleasant fellow—perhaps Irish historians give him that character because he is responsible for all that follows—Dermot MacMurrough, banished and deposed from his kingdom of Leinster, went off to Aquitaine to ask help from Henry II, the first of the Plantagenets. According to the usages of those days, there was nothing very shocking in that. The king, still busy elsewhere, told him to make some arrangement with one of his barons, Richard de Clare, Earl Strongbow, and authorised him to levy troops.

An understanding was arrived at, some advance-guards were dispatched, and Strongbow disembarked at Waterford.

"Earl Strongbow," the Annals of Lough Ce' tell us, "came to Erin with Dermot MacMurrough to avenge his expulsion by Roderick son of Turlough O'Connor. Dermot gave him his own daughter and part of his patrimony, and since then the Saxon foreigners have always remained in Erin."

Finis Hiberniae ! Irreparable subjection.

Strongbow's progress was rapid, and the king soon saw that it was time to put in an appearance in person unless he wished to see his lieutenant supplanting him. He therefore duly arrived in Ireland in 1172, Alexander III having confirmed Adrian IV's Bull by several letters.¹

Roger Hoveden's chronicle describes the arrival :

"All the Archbishops, Bishops, Abbots of all Ireland came to the King of England at Waterford, and received him for King and Lord of Ireland ; swearing fealty to him and his heirs, and the power of reigning over them for ever ; and then they gave him their instruments—and after the example set them by the clergy, the aforesaid Kings and Princes of Ireland (namely the Kings of Cork, Limerick, Ossory, Meath, and Reginald of Waterford) who had been summoned by King Henry's command to appear in his presence and almost all the nobles of Ireland (except the King of Connaught) did in like manner receive Henry, King of England, for Lord and King of Ireland, and they became his men and swore fealty to him and his heirs against all men."

¹ These letters are still preserved in the Black Book of the Exchequer.

Roderick O'Connor, King of Connaught, did likewise in 1175.

In 1185 Henry II sent his youngest son John of ignoble memory as viceroy, and Pope Urban III —the Pope again!—sent to this villain whom he was afterwards to excommunicate a crown of peacock's feathers and letters of recognition.

Thus was accomplished the conquest, brutal and unjustifiable, according to the Irish, of one of the nations which was most faithful to the Pope. Yet we see that it was made at the request of a King of Ireland, under the aegis of three successive Pontiffs, and with the acclamations of the national clergy whose absolute powers of direction both in politics and in religion Ireland has never questioned. It is as well to insist upon these clear and definite statements made before the traditional hostility of the two races had been formed, with its interminable interplay of abuses and rebellion, rebellion and repression. Ireland will often have the right to our indignation and to our pity, but not when she forgets that she herself sent for the abhorred "Saxons" and put herself completely in their power.

As she confused the Saxons with the Norman barons who were her actual masters, it has been suggested that she was ignorant of feudal law and did not know for what she was letting herself in. It is quite possible, but is it probable? Certainly not, as regards those high ecclesiastical dignitaries, the only learned men of the time,

who came to render homage and who must have known its significance. The right is there, all the same ; and it must be admitted that in those days few suzerainties owed their origin to more formal titles or more explicit oaths.

When Henry had received homage, he proceeded to distribute the lands to his great vassals as was the custom in France, Normandy, Great Britain, and the whole feudal world (hence nowadays in Irish titles the name "Fitz" occurs so frequently, which shows descent from royal or princely bastards). The natives, clans, and chieftains had not foreseen this. They could do nothing but give up the best places and seek refuge in the mountains. This was their first grievance and it was a very real one.

On their side the new-comers soon had troubles of their own, scarcely less serious ; representatives of a more advanced civilisation and accustomed to more advanced juridical ideas, they saw with amazement that the Celts by no means appreciated these presumed advantages, refused to associate with them and preferred to live aloof under the laws of their antiquated but national Custom. Similar differences soon spread to the clergy of the two races, and the Norman abbeys excluded Irishmen for a long time.

Polygamy, marriage of brother and sister, slavery of hostages, allowed by druidical custom, had never been entirely suppressed by the efforts of the Christian missionaries. Periodically, when-

ever the power of the Church was shaken by some invasion or civil war, the Celts relapsed into their ancient vices, and a new evangelisation was needed to correct them. When one remembers that in the clans murder, except in the five royal lines, was not punished by death, but could be compounded for ; when we see how mercilessly we endeavour to stamp out in our colonies everything which conflicts with our fundamental morality (will they ever dare to ask us to tolerate human sacrifice or incestuous practices in the name of respect for nationality ?)—we can understand better the haughty bearing of the Anglo-Norman nobles towards the incorrigible semi-barbarians.

This contempt has been perpetuated and not without reason ; with all due respect to the Irish, who are charming people, there has been ever since then a difference of several degrees of civilisation between the two races, the dwellers on the banks of the Thames and the Shannon. Possibly the Celt has suffered more from this than from other more concrete grievances ; he has a proud, sensitive spirit, and the reproach of moral inferiority exasperates him very naturally.

Unfortunately he has never grasped the fact that it is no use denying it, and he has wasted time—nay, centuries—in eloquence and vituperation. Nowadays even, in the twentieth century, the supreme ambition of his most modern interpreters, the Sinn Fein society, is to revert to the costume, Gaelic tongue, and national spirit of the

twelfth century ! for they claim that in those days they formed a nation.

“Do you, then, wish to go back to your infancy ?” the English protest.

“Why not ? Your tutelage has been nothing but rottenness and corruption ; we will make a clean sweep of everything you have taught us.”

Is this only the folly of visionaries ? Not so. This programme is hailed with acclamation by bishops, by a press, and by a university. No wonder John Bull shrugs his shoulders.

Let us now recapitulate three of the first lessons which the past has taught us :

The legality of the Anglo-Saxon sovereignty ; the moral resistance of the Celts to the progress of law and social life ; the spoliation of native property (but not forgetting that the latter belonged not to the individual, but to the clan ; that 700 years of prescriptive right has wiped out the claim ; and that the evictions did not go beyond the fertile valleys of two or three counties).

I will spare you the story of the Irish muddle until the reign of Henry VIII. The Anglo-Normans, so richly dowered by their king, did not have an easy time, warring without respite as much among themselves as against the chieftains. The latter continued to exterminate one another with indefatigable perseverance. The power of the Crown was never anything but a myth, for if the viceroys issued vexatious edicts, no one paid

the smallest attention to them, and they remained a dead letter and were not enforced. For instance, an edict forbidding the wearing of a moustache applied to English subjects, who ignored it as much as the Irish. It is therefore useless to catalogue that under the heading of "Saxon oppression."

When the dynastic quarrels of York and Lancaster were dyeing England with blood and taking a heavy toll of the old nobility, the Irish barons joined in the fray, lost a good many of their number and thus weakened their position in Ireland. Consequently they were gradually forced back to the east and were confined within a narrow strip round Dublin called the Pale. Elsewhere the clans had recovered a free hand.

One of Henry VIII's first cares, in order to bolster up this flagging authority, and at the same time to score another point in his contest against Rome, was to take the title of "King of Ireland." He was not satisfied with holding the island by papal delegation as had been done since Henry II. The move succeeded; the nobles of Ireland, and not only those of English origin, rallied round him. Henry, who could be very tactful and pleasant when it suited him, summoned to his court more than one chieftain with a good Celtic name. The legal point moreover was soon to be definitely decided by Mary Tudor; Pope Paul IV granted her for good his so-called sovereignty over the Island of Saints.

Henry VIII was less successful with his religious revolution. Ireland was certainly the promised

land of prebends and monasteries, for Saint Patrick's foundations had been most prolific. The dioceses were not limited by ancient Roman boundaries; bishops, according to legends of the primitive Church, were as numerous as priests. Probably they did not exaggerate; nowadays for 3,000,000 Roman Catholics there are four archbishops, twenty-three bishops, and three suffragans. The Bishop of Ross has twenty-eight priests under his jurisdiction, Killala thirty-nine, Achonry fifty-one, etc. The average is seventy priests per diocese. In Belgium, with double the population, one archbishop and five bishops suffice.

In 1515 the organisation was almost exclusively monastic; the Augustine canons alone had no less than three hundred houses, the Cistercians ran them close, the mendicant friars of every order were legion, and the minor abuses from which the Church was to suffer so much were naturally the same in Ireland as in England. The clergy, so eminent in the era of Patrick, Brendan, Bridget, and Columba, had lost their fine character. Scandalous anecdotes hailed from Dublin as well as from the English abbeys, and Henry's courtiers knew how to make the most of them; in 1549 the Archbishop of Dublin had to pawn his crozier, and it took eighty years to redeem it.

By the measure which extended his power the king had no difficulty in getting possession of the Church's estates; the new owners seized upon them greedily without scruple, as elsewhere; and

the "native" nobility were not behindhand. There was no lack of Celtic chiefs among those who carried out the confiscations. But the colonised region where such things were possible was limited in area, and in the remaining three-quarters of the island, that is, in the more distant counties, the Church kept its power. Its immense personnel did not assist the healthiness of the body, whose activities were at one time beneficent, but now were swamped by an excessive number of parasites. Yet this solid mass encompassed the mystical Celts so surely that they could not escape from it.

The Protestant faith was always feeble in Ireland and never had much hold in the country districts. Only the court party or the English colonists in the garrisons or administrative posts conformed to it; the natives did not come in contact with it. As in other countries which resisted the early enthusiasm of reform, the psychological moment, once it had passed, did not return; where the Church was not reformed by schism she took herself in hand and reformed herself. Ireland is still the most Catholic country in the world.

On the whole the English Reformation did not treat her with much severity. Some violence in an age of brutality was to be expected, but there was no general persecution, and beyond the Pale and the large towns the Celts were not interfered with in their beliefs. Queen Elizabeth even enjoined toleration and clemency upon Essex. We should give her due credit for this when we

remember the affronts inflicted upon her woman's feelings, her queenly pride, her filial memories and religious prejudices, the Pope's insult to the young sovereign, the attempts upon her life, the horrors of Saint Bartholomew's Day and the Spanish Inquisition, above all the obsession of Spain, at once her worst political and religious enemy.

Ireland gave Elizabeth a good deal of anxiety in other ways. She meant at first to use firmness in her administration only in the districts which she could reach, taking care to avoid any attack upon the mysterious beyond, the haunts of intractable and un-get-at-able chieftains. But fate forced her hand. During her reign anarchy in Ireland reached its height, civil war raged, as did clan warfare, vendettas among the English nobility, massacres, unbridled atrocities. Elizabeth could not remedy matters except piecemeal, and the appalling difficulties would have daunted a less stout heart. If her lieutenants put down a rising in the south, others broke out in the north and west, and everywhere, a tangle of intrigue which would have made most people lose their heads, and would have discouraged the most determined. Everything had to be begun again. She stood firm. At the end of her long reign her law had penetrated to every corner of the island, all the rebels had been punished, every coalition with the foreigner defeated; she alone had really accomplished this conquest, which her ancestors and her father had only embarked upon and never completed.

But from this moment the great resistance became conscious and definite, thanks to a fresh factor which was to dominate antagonism in the future : that is, the identity of the two races with the two opposing religions. Ireland had a fresh grievance ; after having lost her land she saw her religious hierarchy scorned and overthrown. When it was merely a question of vague agrarian or national troubles, there was nobody in that half-civilised lay world to denounce or plead the cause. But on the other hand, as soon as the Church was affected, she who alone was expert in those arts could provide any number of spokesmen ; they were legion, and ever since then the cause of political independence has been confused with that of the traditional Faith. It meant war to the knife and made hostility almost incurable.

This would not have signified so much, for after all supremacy once lost may be restored, despised institutions may by the changing fortune of royal or popular favour recover their prestige, but there is worse than this. During this century the distinct temperaments of the two races become crystallised and antagonistic. Until then the two peoples had points in common, or rather vices in common, in government and political morality. In the sixteenth century they were divorced. Since then the English have made more and more use of their great panacea, compromise, with astonishing success and with results which neither Latin logic, nor German theory, nor the senti-

mental insistence of the Celts can understand. It has become their second nature, the standard of their empire. Have they not even managed, incredible though it appears, to make a compromise with their State religion ? Macaulay has exposed it in too masterly a fashion for it to be necessary for me to recapitulate it. For the last three centuries they have been satisfied with anomalies and half-measures, borrowing from Rome and Calvin, trying to avoid the extreme of both, fearful of affronting either party, starting from a constitution conceived by Archbishop Cranmer, of whom none now dare speak well. Compromise is less happy in theology than in politics or in diplomacy, but it suits the English admirably.

The Irish will never be resigned to it ; concessions are hateful to them. Have they not confused the means with the end ? The end of their rebellion against Anglican compromise is the safety of their Faith. It does not follow that compromise in other spheres is necessarily bad ; it is the secret of political wisdom as of commercial stability. The Irish will have none of it, and have thereby lost all its advantages. Never having progressed as have the English, they blame the latter ; have they ever tried to imitate them ?

The two enemies were now face to face, the glove had been thrown down, the terms of the challenge had been clearly announced. Ireland was going to fight for her soil and for her religion. A little

later she will become conscious of her nationality, and we shall have a third element, politics.

But now England, besides her authentic title-deeds, had a new grievance, in order to justify her severity. Historians are practically unanimous in agreeing that the war against Philip II and foreign politics absorbed Elizabeth and her people far more than the religious quarrel. For the first time the country felt its integrity threatened. Mary Tudor had given it a foretaste of the reprisals it would have to face; the queen's youth aroused all its chivalrous ardour. The horizon clouded quickly; it was a matter of life or death—the enemy was at the gates, cruising outside Plymouth. The empire whose destiny was to be so brilliant was only saved from the terrible Armada by its lucky star.

It was at this fatal crisis that Ireland sowed in the heart of England the germ of constant and well-deserved mistrust. On several occasions the enemy disembarked on the island which is Great Britain's bastion, and some of the Irish—I will not say “Ireland,” so that I may not be accused of making unjust generalisations, yet are there many Irish who do not approve of these things?—some of the Irish held out a friendly hand and allied themselves with the detested Spaniards.

That is not altogether ancient history, for it has repeated itself often since then. When statesmen in London consider Irish claims and problems, can they ever forget those memories or ignore the

dangers ? Would they not be mad not to take them into account ? Those who imprudently forget their history and neglect precautions as was done in 1916 have had cause to repent.

The most serious of these appeals for help from the enemy took place in 1601, shortly before the death of Elizabeth, and the danger which threatened from the two great Ulster rebels, O'Neill and O'Donnell, was very real. Mountjoy, the Queen's skilful lieutenant, only overcame it by a very drastic measure : he began to burn the crops, and the horrified rabble laid down its arms. The Spaniards were helpless, and were killed and captured as they landed.

The incident is a memorable one ; it marks the close of an era, the end of a long impunity. From this date the Irish rebels will never defy their masters with the same light-heartedness, for suppression, which until then had been half-hearted and undecided, was now to change its tactics.

In Whitehall also a change had taken place. The power of the Crown, the authority of the Government, the prestige of royal power, the cohesion of the State had all grown during the century of the Tudor dynasty. Modern political systems were in course of construction. Parliamentary control had not so far made itself felt, for Elizabeth was sufficiently tactful not to exasperate her subjects or her advisers, and gave in to them gracefully, but other parts of the con-

stitutional structure were changed and strengthened. Respect was shown for law. The English nation began to live in peace, to be a civilised society, to work ; regular industries need legality and security in order to prosper. Lieutenants and viceroys were no longer the marauding adventurers of old days. Rebellion ended in punishment, not by an exchange of titles of nobility, or of land or money. Things had now to be taken seriously.

This is the explanation of another misunderstanding, one of Ireland's gravest complaints against England. Ireland is always some generations behind the progress of European politics. True, she has the excuse of her isolation, she has no standard of comparison. "To take things seriously" therefore seems to her to be an intolerable tyranny ; why should she not divert herself as of yore ? The hated Saxon imposed a new mode of life upon her and gave her no warning ; this was sufficient reason for blaming her for everything.

One class had no such excuse, namely, the national clergy, whose mission it was to learn and to instruct others, who lived in contact with the principle of authority, and ought to have known how it was enforced elsewhere if by no other means than through the new order of Jesuits, imported from Spain. But the clergy were obsessed by the idea of the Reformation, and, in order to avoid at all costs pernicious imitations, they preferred, and do so to this day, to confuse

different spheres, foster nationalist illusions, and maintain that the political and social progress of England is not progress at all. We are not going to be taken in by that. The English have been reproached for having treated this sensitive race too roughly, and for not having been more tender to their susceptibilities. Was such treatment customary in those days? What were those susceptibilities worth?

For all practical purposes Ireland was half civilised compared to the nations which she affected to despise so heartily. In 1567 Sidney, one of Elizabeth's lieutenants, wrote to the queen : "There was never a people of worse minds, for matrimony is no more regarded in effect than conjunction between unreasoning beasts. Perjury, murder, and robbery are counted allowable I cannot find that they make any conscience of sin." National heroes were desperate brutes ; one of them, O'Donnell, had to his credit in 1564 the murder of 500 people of quality and 14,000 poor men—enough to make our most successful komitadjis green with envy ! "In Ulster," wrote Fitzwilliam to Cecil, "all is murder, incest, and lying." Possibly there may have been traces of that religious fear so dear to Celtic mysticism ; but every other notion of right or morality had disappeared.

In order to punish rebellions, the Crown made use of radical methods, forfeiture and feudal confiscation. If this seems to us oppressive we must

remember that forty years later in England the Long Parliament made use of the same measure against the supporters of Charles I. In Ireland the ancient Brehon Custom maintained tenure of land and stock by clan and not by the individual ; the head of the clan or "tanaist" was administrator and manager. The more powerful the chief and his clan, the more enormous were the confiscations, and the more difficult to accomplish. These forfeitures, the largest of which consisted of 500,000 acres in Munster in 1583, had never been completely carried out, nor rigorously enforced, but Elizabeth bequeathed to her successors more serious methods of coercion.

On his accession in 1603, Mary Stuart's son had to punish Ulster, which Mountjoy had conquered, and as the chiefs had fled to Spain or elsewhere, there was nothing more to be done than to record the loss of their rights. Now James I came from Scotland and wished to consolidate the union of the two kingdoms, but found an obstacle in his way : on the Border between the two countries there lived a fierce and warlike race, perfectly brave and loyal, but living by raids on the rich English counties over the Border, making a pretext of the wars which were practically continuous between the two countries. This had to be put down.

As he had lands in Ulster to dispose of, and tiresome subjects to get rid of, James colonised after the manner of those days : he took the Scots of the Border wholesale and planted them out in

Ireland with a small contingent from London. At the same time the English courts by judicial decisions suppressed the ancient agrarian custom of the Irish clans and unified the law of property in the two countries. That matter also was never forgiven.

From these unwilling colonists, who were deported men rather than immigrants, were descended the Ulster Presbyterians, who form one quarter of the Irish to-day, a race most faithful to the empire, industrious and enterprising, which has contrived to be prosperous in one of the poorest and most arid corners of the island, in spite of adversity and obstacles without number,

For three centuries they have been exposed to the hostility of the former inhabitants, who were driven westwards, abandoned by their chiefs, neglected. Such hatred is excusable, but need it be eternal ? After all the new-comers would gladly have dispensed with the gift ; they had some difficulty in realising that they were grudged the deserted bog where their king had thrust them. The cruelties which they suffered can never be forgiven. If nowadays the aversion is mutual, whose fault is it ? We shall see.

The two races had only one common characteristic : both were equally attached to their political and religious liberties. Both were equally persecuted by those Stuarts from whom they had every reason to expect more sympathy. The Roman Catholics, in memory of his mother's martyrdom,

expected from James I at least a tolerant indulgence; this monarch, at once capricious, mean, and obstinate, soon undeceived them. In 1605 he banished severely all Roman priests, and the papists were more harassed under his reign than under the Tudors.

Charles I did no better, but extended oppression to the whole population, including Protestants. His tyranny was of a different order; religious matters were relegated to the background without being any less bitter, and his main interest centred in the royal prerogative with its arbitrary fiscal rights indispensable for paying his Pretorian guard and for defying Parliament. Ireland had to provide a large share of funds for his privy purse. In 1635 the notorious Strafford, Charles's evil genius and right-hand man, fertile of brain and firm of purpose, arrived in Dublin as Lord Deputy, and Ireland was to know a system of customs, fines, and industrial taxation as odious as it was useless.

She might have consoled herself with the thought that England was even more exasperated and had more extorted from her by the same men. Not at all. Ireland ignores or forgets this, and the English are thus accused of crimes and extortions from which they suffered equally, and for which they themselves exacted the death penalty.

Finally Strafford was recalled in order to mount the scaffold, and his departure left the whole structure in peril. While all this dirty linen was

being washed at Westminster, and the King lost his favourites and the instruments of his revenges, then fled, and started fighting, Ireland was left alone and had time to breathe.

At this moment she committed her greatest mistake. She profited by the respite to commit a grievous crime, the massacre of the Ulster Protestants. As in 1641, so in 1916. “England’s difficulty is Ireland’s opportunity.” A dangerous phrase, and fallacious precept. All Irish modern history can be dated back to that; everything else can be traced to it, a series of links in the chain of circumstances.

The monstrous crime brought suppression in its train, as soon as England had put her affairs in order; suppression fanned hatred, whence grew fresh crimes which had to be suppressed, and so on in a vicious circle.

Thus on October 23rd, 1641, the wild men of Ulster came down from their mountain fastnesses, and took their revenge upon the colonists of James I. They did many things, according to the order of their leader Phelim O’Neill: “Kill all Protestants, irrespective of age or sex.” The rest of the island soon joined in. The priests had to send in a return of their victims every week; they reckoned about 154,000 between October 1641 and April 1642. Sir William Petty’s calculation comes to about the same figure, as does that of a priest in Cork in 1645 exhorting to fresh slaughters: “You have already killed 150,000 enemies in these

four or five years. I think more Heretic enemies have been killed ; would that they had all been ! It remains for you to slay all the other heretics, or expel them from the bounds of Ireland."

Enthusiasm such as this did not mince methods, and the tortures were hideous, such as "boiling the hands of little children before their mother's faces." Wholesale drowning was resorted to when they wanted to put in quick work, or else, a favourite form of torture in Ireland, the victims were left to be sucked down in those famous bogs which leave no traces. There is a long report on this matter by Sir John Temple, with forty folios of depositions, preserved in Trinity College, Dublin.

Sir John Temple adds this damning comment : "They were completely taken by surprise, having so far lived in perfect amity with the native Irish," and there is other evidence which confirms the pacific attitude of these Ulster Scots prior to this bloody treachery. Besides they had prospered on unfavourable soil ; what better proof that they had worked hard instead of worrying their neighbours ; had they prospered where the clans had left sterility ? One can understand what covetous greed, burning regrets, and implacable resentment were aro used.

" Those outsiders have stolen the best part of our island."

" Pardon me. They never wanted to come. And if you call it the best part of your island, who made it so ? Of what value was it in your

day, when ravaged by your quarrels and under your antiquated Custom ? ”

In similar circumstances in feudal times the prosperous tenant was evicted. Instead of copying feudalism in many things which would have been profitable, Ireland followed its example only in this unfortunate practice. She reckoned without Cromwell.

He dealt with the situation with no light hand, and for the second time Ireland was compelled to take things seriously.

Masters of England and Scotland, Oliver and his Ironsides landed at Dublin in 1649. They came to punish not only the turbulent Papists and the intrigues of Rinuccini, the Papal Nuncio, but a party of royalist refugees led by Queen Henrietta Maria. The Ironsides were the most highly disciplined army of that day ; their leader, after seven years of a stern school, understood strategy. A few towns tried to resist ; he deported one inhabitant out of every ten to the Barbadoes.

Having once made an example, he treated the others, we must admit, with more clemency than was usual among conquerors in those days, and the day after an attack he had one of his veterans hanged for stealing a fowl.

He was prompt and severe. But was he just ? His victims have never been able to mention him dispassionately. Yet history does not paint him as the arch-villain which Irish rancour would have us believe. It would be difficult to accuse him of

meanness or petty hatred. Though he was inexorable in the service of a cause which he considered holy, England and Scotland had more cause to complain than Ireland ; if he quelled the latter with more severity and bitterness, it was because he found her more barbaric, more guilty, and more incorrigible. And think how hateful must the presence of a foreigner, a Roman legate, have been to this great patriot, jealous guardian of national empire.

Cromwell's main act of suppression was a radical one. He drove the Celts to the far side of the Shannon, which cuts the island in two from north to south, just as we now treat African tribes, or the Americans the Red Indians. In the east he confiscated thousands of acres or installed his faithful Ironsides as soldier-farmers.

Was this blind and unjust spoliation ? No doubt it was, as are all collective reprisals. They are none the less necessary sometimes ; the causes of them are too quickly forgotten. The possessions of the royalist English nobles and those of the Anglican Church were affected just as much as those of the murderers of 1641. The latter had slain 150,000 Protestants. Should they have been brought to book one by one ? Would it have been possible ? Besides, it did not last. The soldier-farmers, knowing nothing of the business, could not farm. They did not settle, but sold their land to their officers.

As soon as the Protector had other matters in hand—European wars, fractious Parliaments, dynastic ambitions—all his victims rallied round the

party of Charles Stuart, the Pretender. After the Restoration the Ironsides were soon harassed in their turn, and emigrated to New England.

Ireland had her revenge during the next reign. The only compact bodies of Protestants left were in Ulster, and Ulster had to submit to the tyrannies of the royal bigot James II, instigated by the Earl of Tyrconnell, a Catholic Irishman, and the Jesuit Petre. Thanks to them no Protestants were allowed in the army, in the magistracy, nor in municipal corporations ; and worse than this, what was particularly oppressive in those times and places, Protestants were not allowed to carry arms.

This measure did not wound only the dignity of the gentlefolk ; to understand its full significance we must note a new fact. Massacres like those of 1641 had been more or less spontaneous reactions, without much preliminary organisation ; therefore there was not much fear that they would occur very frequently. Now, on the contrary, all that changed. Though the progress of other races came to her slowly and late in the day, Ireland came into her own at last. The rebel people began to organise. We now have the first appearance of secret societies, still more or less nebulous, and with them what we may call propaganda by direct action. They were to play a dominating part in the history of the island.

When the Celtic clans and chieftains had been driven beyond the Shannon by Cromwell, many of them, ruined and miserable, preferred to defy the edict. They led the life of outlaws hidden in

swamps and bogs, harassing Cromwell's colonists to the best of their ability. They were nicknamed Tories, and this name, which was adopted by the royalists and all who hated the Protector, the republicans, and the Puritans, has remained to this day the name of the Conservative party.

A little later, under James II, Rapparees or robbers came upon the scene; then Houghers or cut-throats in 1710, Whiteboys in 1761, Defenders in 1760, Invincibles, Molly Maguires, Ribbonmen, and more recently Fenians. The name of these bands changed often, but the Rapparees had many imitators, and their methods have survived. They flourished exceedingly under Mr. Birrell's beneficent protection for ten years, and are now held in high esteem.

All these bandits have a common name, "moon-lighters"; they work by moonlight. Usually they undertake the dirty work of political associations of outward respectability, such as criminal boycotting, firing ricks, ham-stringing horses and cattle, etc. They go farther when they dare.

It was in the face of all this that James II disarmed Ulster, and the Rapparees made the most of it. In 1688 another massacre was certainly contemplated, but fortunately William of Orange came to the rescue of English liberties.

Before James II resigned himself to exile at St. Germain, he made an attempt at a rising in Ireland with French assistance. The situation was favourable. Thus for the second time, in

espousing the cause of a dethroned English king, Ireland's reasoning was logically unsound. She rebelled against English sovereignty—that we take for granted—but why should she be more legitimist than England when it was a question of restoring the Stuarts? Because James II was a Roman Catholic, Ireland all of a sudden forgot her so-called inalienable rights, began to wear the white cockade, and for fifty years she sang.

“ ‘Twas all for our rightful King.”

Rightful! Is that not rather a painful memory for her to-day?

James II had, it is true, done well by his religion in Ireland. From the moment of his arrival, his severity, confiscations of property, and sentences of death upon two or three thousand noted Protestants drove them all towards Ulster, where they were confined and trapped in their turn. Finally, in 1691, William of Orange was able to deliver and avenge them by the decisive victory of the Boyne, which Ulster still celebrates every year. The last of the Stuarts threw up the sponge with a cowardice of which his Irish and French allies kept a poignant memory.

William III had to put down the Rapparees. That was soon done; he put a price on their heads, and the success was beyond his dreams: “brothers and cousins cut one another’s throats” to get the reward. Six months later the Rapparees were no more. The vanquished party relapsed into dissensions and quarrels, and the last of the

chieftains, Hugh O'Donnell, sold himself for an annuity of five hundred pounds.

A fresh reaction set in. According to Irish ideas, all the oppressive measures violated the treaty of capitulation of Limerick, by which religious liberty had been promised them. The fact is that the text of the treaty left a loophole for evasion, and neither side was in those days very scrupulous about keeping treaties. It is too much to hope that a piece of parchment can prevent the workings of natural and popular reactions as irresistible as the forces of nature.

The first punitive measure was, as usual, the confiscation of a million acres. We must admit that William rewarded persons much less reputable than Cromwell's soldiers, and for much less worthy services. Ireland became, as under the Plantagenets, the portion of political creatures, court intriguers, and royal mistresses. It was adding insult to injury. Not that William of Orange was by nature low, disloyal, and tyrannical, but his accession could not alter all at once customs and a court circle which his two predecessors had corrupted. Both the men and the system were rotten.

This explains a whole series of economic measures which were utterly stupid, initiated at first under Charles II and aggravated by his successor. They consisted of Customs restrictions which were always one-sided.

In 1663 Ireland was excluded from the Navigation Act, and her maritime interests were injured.

In 1666 Ireland was forbidden to export to England horses, cattle, meat, butter, or cheese ; after that nothing but potatoes was planted. When Charles II forbade the export of cattle, Ireland set to work to rear sheep, and soon produced the best wool in Europe. William III forbade her to export it.

The only remedy was smuggling. From every little lonely and deserted bay on the coast, Ireland sent her wool to France, and received in exchange wine, which she handed on to England. Bordeaux wine was at that time known in London as " Irish wine," and some Irish dealers in the capital acquired a great reputation. This traffic, so vividly described by Froude, brought in enormous profits, but the moral effect was disastrous ; as a result of living by her wits and defying authority, with the excuse of oppressed patriotism, Ireland made deplorable progress in this art, and became once more a lawless country.

Protestant Ulster was no better treated. Her speciality was the culture of flax and the linen industry. She had been promised protection, but English competitors opposed it. In spite of all, by sheer tenacity and hard work, these Ulstermen managed to prosper, just as they had succeeded a century before in cultivating their bogs.

All this is reiterated so often nowadays in polemics, that it is just as well to make some comments upon it. First of all let me point out that Ireland owes this state of things to the

Stuarts, who were the dynasty of her choice, and whom she helped with such a willing hand.

Moreover at the time they were enacted these measures did not cause ruin ; by devoting herself to sheep and wool under Charles II, Ireland attained great prosperity, and her archives prove that the island had never been before and never was again equally flourishing. We have seen how smuggling remedied the restrictions upon woollen exports. There were abundant compensations, and Ireland, full of money, became one of the best markets for English trade.

We must not forget that this kind of abuse was universal at a time of petty restrictions from which all the colonies without exception suffered until the end of the eighteenth century ; an epoch when other countries had their salt taxes, municipal import duties, and so forth, which were vexatious in other ways.

Ireland has some difficulty in explaining how Ulster, under identical conditions and obstacles, was able to survive and progress, while the rest of the island vegetated and retrograded.

She urges that though the disappearance of her industries did no great harm in 1700, it left her disabled a century later when the United Kingdom became a great manufacturing State. Is that not a very far-fetched way of excusing idleness and apathy ? Does not Ulster's example show that the excuse is a poor one ? Was free trade between the two islands not restored in 1779 ?

Finally the Orange reaction had a third aspect, the best known and the most hateful—the penal laws against the Catholics. They extend over several years and the chief one dates from Queen Anne's reign. It is the retort to all that James II had promulgated against the Protestants, and to all that the English Puritans had suffered under Charles II's restoration—Draconian laws they certainly were. But it is admitted that they were not drafted in London, but voted by a Dublin Parliament at the instance of the Presbyterians who had been delivered from the hands of the enemy. Ulster had been too frightened, and had several good reasons for insisting upon safeguards.

Let me assure all those tender-hearted souls who are justly moved by Irish diatribe—all this has been done away with long ago. I shall only enumerate these laws in order to mention their abrogation.

Catholics were allowed in 1778 to own real estate on 999 years' leases; in 1782, to keep schools after having obtained permission from the Protestant Bishop of the diocese, to hear or celebrate the sacrifice of the Mass, to have horses worth more than £5 sterling,¹ to inhabit the towns of Limerick and Galway; in 1792, to practise at the Bar, but without reaching the rank of King's

¹ Before then any Protestant had the right to remove the horse of the first Irishman whom he met, by paying him £5. There has been a lot of exaggeration on this subject; we must not forget that even in England in Charles II's time a saddle horse was not worth more than £2 10s. (see Macaulay, King, Davenant, etc.).

Counsel, to become attorneys, to open schools without permission from the Protestant Bishop, to marry Protestants if the service were celebrated by a priest of the Established Church, to own land on the same conditions as Protestants.

In 1782 the right which allowed Grand Juries to recover from Catholics all losses due to thefts or rebellions was withdrawn.

In 1793 Roman Catholics were admitted to the electoral franchise, to the magistracy, to the Grand Jury, to municipal councils, to Dublin University, to every rank in the army except that of general. Those possessed of a certain amount of means, were allowed to carry arms, etc.

Such were then those hateful penal laws of 1704. For nearly a century the Irish Catholics were pariahs. More than 500,000 of the youngest and proudest emigrated between 1691 and 1745; they went to fight in European armies, and the English met them again on the field of Fontenoy. The remainder, too prolific for a country of pasture and bog, lived abject, miserable lives, and were decimated by famine.

Is there any excuse for these reactionary severities? Good heavens! Ireland had no monopoly of wrongs and persecutions. We must judge men and their deeds by the age and the circumstances wherein they live, and in the century which saw the Thirty Years' War, the Dragonnades, and the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, we must not condemn the English alone, for having struck too severely after such provocation.

CHAPTER III

MODERN HISTORY

WE have now arrived, through centuries of terrible suffering and pitiless cruelties, at the calmer days of modern times, at the era of religious and political toleration, of reparation for shattered rights, of parliamentary guarantees. Will Ireland have order and peace at last ?

English legislators had become more indulgent, more enlightened, more conciliatory. They were more inclined to make allowances for Ireland, and to loosen the reins. Then periodically, every twenty or thirty years or so, they had reason to regret it ; Ireland took advantage of these acts of clemency and they had to be cancelled. It is one long round of “ benefits forgot,” and the inevitable suppression following upon them—the whole thing intensified by the fatal but very tenacious illusion that English statesmen only give in to fear. As Irish revolt is continuous and endemic, it can always be shown that threatening agitation has preceded conciliatory laws, and it is easy to assume that they are cause and effect. For those who know the character of Pitt, Wellington, Peel, and Mr. Balfour, this is somewhat hard to believe, but

Ireland always insists upon ignoring good intentions, refusing to be grateful, and perpetuating animosity.

The first serious attempt at concession was the legislation at the close of the eighteenth century abrogating the penal laws.

Ireland had at that time her Parliament sitting at Dublin, with Lords and Commons, an ancient institution dating from the days of the Plantagenets, similar to the Parliament in London, and having experienced the same evolution and vicissitudes. For a long time it had been composed only of nobles and prelates nominated by the Crown. A celebrated statute of Henry VII's reign, "Poynings's Law," laid down its functions until 1782; no Bill could be introduced in Dublin which had not previously been examined and approved by the Privy Council in London. Thus countenanced, the Bill might be rejected, though it might not be amended by the Irish Parliament. That is roughly what the Reichstag had to be content with under William II.

During the eighteenth century, both at Dublin and at Westminster alike, well-known constitutional and parliamentary progress was defined. In 1780 the Irish House included remarkable orators, such as Flood and Grattan, whose eloquence is as traditional as that of Fox and Burke.

Grattan, moreover, was a first-class statesman, endowed with determination and practical energy. It was he who specified what the national claims should be, carried out the repeal of the penal laws

and definitely emancipated his fellow-countrymen by two great legislative victories. In 1782 he obtained the abrogation of Poynings's Law, thus restoring parliamentary initiative to his country, and he could then claim that Ireland was a free country and a nation once more. Afterwards, and as a logical consequence, the Roman Catholics acquired the right to vote.

It is only right to observe that none of these laws of equity could have succeeded without the consent of George III's ministers. According to the Irish, they only bowed before the storm of warlike preparations on the part of the leagues, Volunteers and Defenders, who were all aflame with the theories of the French Revolution. We shall see if Pitt were the kind of man to fear anything of the sort, and if he would not show the iron hand wherever he thought it necessary.

How did the Irish make use of their new liberties which Grattan had won for them? In 1791 they founded the League of United Irishmen, on the principles of '89, imported from Paris. Its object was to unite against England, both Protestants and Roman Catholics; and the Presbyterians of Ulster, disgusted by the intolerance of the official Episcopal Church, consented to enrol in it. As a matter of fact they were the dupes of plausible talkers who concealed ugly motives; once the English were disposed of, so they reasoned, there would be little trouble in getting rid of these tiresome Protestants, and woe to those who allowed

themselves to be cut off and led astray by vain promises !

The project was revealed by a speech in the Dublin Parliament by one Dr. Duigenan.

" Irish Catholics to a man esteem Protestants as usurpers of their estates. To this day they settle these estates on the marriage of their sons and daughters. They have accurate maps of them. They have lately published in Dublin a map of this kingdom cantoned out among the old proprietors."

A premature rising in 1793 opened the eyes of the Protestants, and made them understand what to expect ; some of the scoundrels who were taken prisoners, unversed in the secrecy of conspiracies, confessed that " when matters were more ripe, all Protestants and Presbyterians were to be killed in one night."

For two or three years, under the name Defenders of the Faith, an abominable band of firebrands had raged over the island, corresponding to the Chouans. Nocturnal crimes, agrarian and others, became more and more frequent. In Ulster an inoffensive Protestant teacher called Barclay was thus murdered with all his family, wife and children. The incident created a great sensation. Ulster was obliged to admit that it had been misled, and that Defenders and United Irishmen were one and the same. The reaction was violent ; in their turn the Protestants founded their League

of Orangemen in 1795 and swore to exterminate those savage brutes, whose victims they had narrowly escaped being once more. They took up again the old cry of Cromwell's Puritans, "To Hell or Connaught."

From that time the Catholic rebels, searching for other allies, made friends with the Convention and the Directoire, and Hoche came to give them a helping hand in 1796. This put quite a different complexion on the problem, and it made Pitt, who had up to now been well-disposed towards Ireland, an opponent in spite of himself. Pitt and England had at that time only one idea, war to the death against the murderous Jacobins. Ireland, by allying herself against such a man, and such a nation, signed her own death-warrant, all the more because she had just received so many concessions. As usual the Martyred Island produced a pretext. Pitt had recalled a viceroy from whom much was expected; a feeble excuse for calling upon the enemy for help.

The historic parallel is a tempting one, between the invasions of Queen Elizabeth's reign and of 1796 and the appeals to Germany in 1916. When the Irish asked for help from the Spaniards of Philip II, at least they were applying to co-religionists, but that the Roman Catholics should have opened their doors to the man from Quiberon surprises us more, and is perhaps the most absurd paradox among the many which abound in the history of Ireland.

Between this rebellion and that of 1916 there are other points of comparison. They both broke out at a moment when it was most ill-fitting that Ireland should complain of persecution, since she was on the contrary overwhelmed with concessions. She was not in the least grateful. We can also find in both crises the wavering of the national clergy, whose influence is so considerable. Wolfe Tone, the leader of the rebels from 1796 to 1798, a socialist from the very start, and open disciple of the Jacobins, did not conceal his hatred of priests. He did not consider them sufficiently sure and reliable allies, since the Church could not approve his violent schemes. The leaders of Sinn Fein are more moderate to-day, but they profess the same impatience of the religious yoke.

On the one hand we find bishops reproving officially the brutal side; on the other hand some prelates take a different view and their indulgence is ill-concealed. Again, the young priests, one and all, defy the pontifical charges, take part in meetings or join leagues which their bishops have condemned. Enthusiasm is infectious, and the word "nationalism" calms the scruples of this most submissive hierarchy. The faithful make the most of this encouraging example; and why should they hesitate, if the attraction is strong enough to shake the discipline of the shepherds of the flock?

Hoche's expedition failed ingloriously, but the island was none the more peaceful for that. Wolfe

Tone and his United Irishmen continued their agitation. Since the Government could not, while war was raging, allow such coalitions with the enemy to pass with impunity, martial law was proclaimed ; Ireland had to submit to summary reprisals from a garrison of 60,000 men, incited by the Protestants to avenge them for all the outrages which they had suffered against their persons and properties.

In the face of all this, Wolfe Tone's followers redoubled their excesses. Suddenly, in 1798, the insurrection once more gained the upper hand, with a repetition of the horrors of the Thirty Years' War. It only lasted for a month, but quite long enough to justify the most exaggerated fears on the part of the Protestants. In the south they were seized everywhere, dragged to Vinegar Hill to the revolutionary headquarters, and shot after a mock trial, with prayers, exorcisms, absolution, and sprinkling of holy water. At Kildare a father and his child were impaled and slowly roasted alive. At Scullabogue 184 men, women, and children were burnt alive in a barn ; some Roman Catholics protested, and were thrown into the furnace. At Wexford Bridge, men were drowned wholesale ; two brutes stuck a pike into them and threw them into the water. Including those who were punished, there were altogether between 150,000 and 200,000 victims.

Ulster was spared, for the more compact Protestant centres could protect themselves better. But the slaughter in the south made Ulstermen

renew their steadfast vows never to accept such masters, and never to relinquish English protection. Those vows have never been changed, and it is as well to remember on what memories they are founded. How can one ever expect pardon and oblivion between Protestants, haunted by the thought of the cold-blooded massacres of 1641 and 1798, and Nationalists who never deprecated them openly and still go on pilgrimages to Wolfe Tone's tomb and honour his scoundrels as martyrs ?

The rebellion was quickly suppressed because the help from France came too late. A century earlier it would have brought upon Ireland pitiless reprisals, but Pitt was above petty spite ; he was just and firm, but would not tolerate cruelties. He drew from this turmoil only one conclusion, that which is drawn by another historian, Lord Rosebery, a statesman of moderate views, eminently liberal, impartial and disinterested : "The one lesson of the rebellion was that the whole system of Irish government must be remodelled."

Grattan's eloquence had failed ; it had demanded rights, but had not said enough about duties.

Pitt decided upon Union ; there would be no more Parliament in Dublin, and in exchange Irish deputies would come and vote at Westminster. There was a happy precedent for this : Scotland had adopted this plan in 1707 and had approved of it. Pitt only neglected one thing—the consent of the Irish, no doubt thinking it superfluous to argue and reason with firebrands ; a Government worthy of

the name only stoops to that when other resources fail. With such opponents, and on the morrow of such horrors, he had no scruples about the choice of methods, and he won the consent of the Irish Parliament by corruption.

Everyone knows how votes were bought and sold in those days, how little comment it aroused, and how Pitt himself was returned by a rotten borough. But this does not affect Irish agitators, who look upon this matter as fair game, and the corrupt origin of the Union has always been their favourite argument. They forget the causes, and win an easy success by laying stress only upon the vitiated form.

No one can deny that the Dublin Parliament, so deeply regretted, had always been venal; in 1800 it was at the same stage of development as the Houses at Westminster were in 1730 in Walpole's day. All the votes were bought by bargaining with administrative posts, titles, or hard cash.

Before deciding upon any scheme, the Viceroy, representing the Cabinet in London, was asked—“What are your wishes, and how much will you pay us?” Every member of the National Assembly had his price. By a supreme irony, the great law of Catholic emancipation of 1792 had only been passed thanks to Pitt's express instructions and to the usual wire-pulling.

Before leaving for ever that Senate which he had made illustrious, Grattan, in a moving protest,

vowed that the Union would alienate Ireland from England irretrievably.

But what could have been more hostile to England than Ireland in 1798 ? Armed rebellion, paroxysms of national hatred, and religious fanaticism, three invitations to the enemy followed by their landing—no light matter. What more do you want ? The wars of the Counter Revolution have been compared with the Great European War, and nothing has been exaggerated ; then, too, England's existence was at stake, and she could not afford to be distracted by Irish pleasantries. Now that we are allies, and that all our enemies both behind and before us are the same, we ought to understand better the spirit of the great Minister who watched so jealously over her destinies when they were in peril.

Grattan had been the champion of political liberty, properly speaking. Another illustrious Irishman, Daniel O'Connell, now came to the fore as the upholder of religious liberty. The Catholics, although they had become once more citizens, electors, and lawyers, still suffered from numerous disabilities ; every career was open to them, but they were not admitted to the highest ranks in the magistracy, they were not allowed to become Ministers or generals. They might enter the doors and sit in the ante-chamber, but never at their master's table ; justice was meted out to them so grudgingly as to be insulting.

O'Connell had been educated at the convents of

Douai and Saint Omer, and had witnessed the excesses of the French Revolution ; as a result he had remained resolutely Conservative, and his patriotic and religious convictions were always tempered by respect for established order. Till the end he maintained the principle—a novelty in the history of his race—of liberation by lawful means. He found the moment propitious for his programme, owing to the failure of violent methods in 1798, which helped to convince intelligent men ; and owing also to Pius VII's moderating influence in the direction of conciliation, which won over the clergy. He therefore rose rapidly. His Catholic Association was soon supreme ; it held monster assemblies which were under perfect control ; all the faithful were members without exception, and thanks to its discipline, irreproachable methods, the coherence of its ideas, and the justice of its demands, its impulse was irresistible. By rousing the nation through an enthusiasm which was truly ideal, and by allying himself through the nobility of his cause and the sincerity of his propaganda with the giants of English Liberalism and with far-sighted Conservatives such as Canning, the Liberator proved that a genuine stirring of opinion can have as much force as the convulsions of a riot and the terror of secret societies.

The Duke of Wellington bowed before the storm, and since 1829 there has not been the slightest inequality, civil or political, between Roman Catholics and Protestants.

The last intolerable injustice, that of having to pay tithe to the Established Church, disappeared in 1838, and the final separation of the Protestant Church of Ireland and the State was completed by Gladstone in 1869. The Island of Saints was in that respect more favoured than England, where tithe is still due, and where dissenters of all denominations have still to submit to the existence of a State Church.

Shrewd lawyer as well as inspired orator, O'Connell had never allowed his partisans to deviate towards the illegalities which are so dear to the national character. At the height of his triumph he was swept away by the demagogery which he had inflamed. All Irish leaders have known that reverse side of their glory, and endured the same remorse at their inability to control the exasperated mob. Social discipline has never been inculcated in this people, and neither by education nor by temperament can it enjoy liberty for long without abusing it.

Already the campaign against the tithe, started in 1830 immediately after England had granted total rehabilitation, had plunged Ireland once more into an orgy of blood and crime. O'Connell, although he disapproved whole-heartedly of the methods of ruffianism, so contrary to his own, had to back up his friends, protest against the rigours of the law which nevertheless he respected profoundly, and had to inveigh against authority, justice, police, by taking the part of the criminals.

His attitude in this business has often served as an example to the leaders who followed him. Neither Isaac Butt nor Parnell nor Redmond was the accomplice of the Fenian assassins of 1870, of the dynamiters of 1884, of the agrarian terrorists of 1909, or of the traitors of 1916. And yet they were unanimous in deplored their punishment, and in demanding boundless impunity for their compromising followers. Out of this Ireland has reared a misleading "martyrology," by mourning these dubious "heroes."

Absorbed by her struggles for religious freedom, Ireland had as yet hardly raised any objections to the Union of 1801. About 1840, however, this question came to the front rank, and became the great national cry; the repeal of Pitt's Statute, return to Parliamentary autonomy in Dublin, Home Rule and the right to be master in one's own house were demanded.

The whole apparatus of monster meetings as in 1828 was revived on an appeal from the clergy, and in 1843 O'Connell thought he was on the eve of a fresh victory. But he no longer held the best trump card which he had played before; he had lost the moral support of England, which had been very considerable, and to which he had owed much more of his earlier success than he had imagined.

The majority of those who had seconded him in the name of religious toleration grew impatient of this incessant and noisy agitation; they saw

that Ireland obtained quite easily at Westminster anything which she asked for reasonably, and they ignored these pin-pricks ; they realised that the only reason for which the Irish Parliament was to be revived was in order to perpetuate an enmity of which no secret was made, and which was, at this stage of the proceedings, frankly ungrateful.

O'Connell failed. England was not afraid, which he had reckoned on, having misunderstood the reasons for the concessions of former years. Peel, who had been so conciliatory on a question of conscience, on this occasion opposed and crushed the movement for Repeal.

Ireland had now a fresh weapon which she could use against her so-called stepmother. The Union gave her 103 members in the House of Commons, and about 84 of these represented hostile constituencies. These were enough to alter the English balance of parties, and naturally their weight tended towards the Radical party, crazy about national autonomy and always flirting with all movements for independence, even the most artificial and unjustifiable, and more and more indifferent to British dignity and Imperial cohesion. May England perish rather than that the smallest humanitarian Utopia of John Bright, Cobden's economic theories, or the doctrinaire and humiliating diplomacy of Russell and Gladstone should go by the board ! The Little Englanders have always been the natural allies of anti-English Ireland.

They first united in opposition to the Cabinet of Robert Peel. This coalition subsisted latterly quite as much by parliamentary necessity as for love of principles, for the eighty-four votes of the Irish Nationalists have often saved Whig Governments. That is the reason why they were always against redistribution ; those 103 seats were attributed to Ireland when her 5,500,000 inhabitants constituted 35 per cent. of the United Kingdom. Now they are only 10 per cent., and she should not have more than 67 members out of a total of 670. We are still some way from seeing England annihilate Ireland !

Thanks to this disproportionate influence, Ireland has had a large share of power and of favours, each time that the Liberals have been in power. Beyond this she has had even more abundant and substantial benefits from the Conservatives. Yet she still remains one of the worst problems of modern Europe ; from 1840 to the present day, now flattered by the Whigs, and now petted by the Tories, she has never been more unruly, tormented, discontented, sterile, decadent, and refractory. She is the only failure of that Empire which is fortunate and prosperous above all others, the only nightmare of the greatest of colonising nations. Will she make us believe that England is the only cause of all her woes ? England whose light hand rules the most diverse races and the most vast dominions with a minimum of troops and troubles ?

Disraeli stated the problem in one of his first parliamentary attacks upon Peel.

"What," he asked, "did this eternal Irish question mean? One said it was a physical question, another a spiritual question. Now it was the absence of an aristocracy, then the absence of railroads. It was the Pope one day, potatoes the next. . . . They had a starving population, an absentee aristocracy, and an alien Church, and in addition the weakest executive in the world. That was the Irish question. Well, then, what would honourable gentlemen say if they were reading of a country in that position? They would say at once 'the remedy was revolution.' But Ireland could not have a revolution, and why? Because Ireland was connected with another and more powerful country. . . . What, then, was the duty of an English Minister? To effect by his policy all those changes which revolution would do by force. That was the Irish question in its integrity."

This was well said. Yet Disraeli had to confess later on, when he had had to give up biting criticisms and try his hand at ruling, that the famous question was easier to define than to resolve. In 1845 Peel, when asking Parliament for £9,000 for Maynooth, said :

"I call on you to recollect that you are responsible for the peace of Ireland. I say you must break up, in some way or other, that formidable confederacy which exists in that country against

the British Government and the British connection. I do not believe you can break it up by force. . . . You can do much to break it up by acting in a spirit of kindness, forbearance, and generosity."

So spoke the Conservative statesman whom Ireland has most abused; so have spoken and performed all his successors since. All have had the same disillusionments. The Irishman is never content. He says that he has excellent reasons for it, but when he makes the "Saxon" responsible for all his woes, he exaggerates. Here is the first example.

The island was decimated after 1830 by constant dearth, and in 1847 by an appalling famine during which 300,000 unfortunate people perished; from 1847 to 1852, 1,300,000 inhabitants emigrated and the population decreased by 20 per cent. Whose fault was it? You can guess what answer the demagogues give. In reality there were two causes which were entirely economic.

After the unjust export duties of 1666, the Irish poor lived solely by growing potatoes, for which their soil is particularly suitable. The potato has bad seasons. And since the Irish peasantry, which has always been the most backward in Europe in agricultural methods, used to leave the crop in the ground instead of looking after it carefully, and only dug it up as it was wanted, the best part was often frozen or rotted in bad winters. In 1846-47 it had all these misfortunes.

On the other hand, as the race is most prolific, the population had almost trebled in sixty years.

From 2,800,000 inhabitants in 1785, it had grown to 8,300,000 in 1845. This would have been all very well if the resources of the soil had been sufficient. But a good quarter of the island was uncultivated, and how could 220 inhabitants be supported on one acre of cultivated land, at a time when land lay fallow and when the working was neither intensive nor intelligent, nor even continuous ? All the Home Rule in the world could not have spared them the atrocious distress of 1847.

For what can England be blamed in this matter ? For having under Charles II and William III discouraged other forms of cultivation, left Ireland without industries, left big properties through absenteeism in the hands of agents who were notoriously indifferent to the fate of the unfortunate, and in any case took no trouble to improve agricultural produce or to exploit poor soils ?

None of these things, blameworthy in themselves, would explain the great disaster like the two direct causes which we have mentioned. The economic obstacles which are cited had disappeared in 1779, they had not prevented Ulster from living in comfort. Besides, England was not slow in remedying matters ; she gave help to Ireland with that haste and ample generosity which she always brings to great catastrophes. Parliament voted a subsidy of £10,000,000, an immense sum for Budgets in those days ; public works of no importance were undertaken in order to provide employment for 200,000 men and to feed the same number of

families, public kitchens distributed nearly 3,000,000 rations every day. Private charity vied with official efforts, and we know that no people opens its purse with the same large-heartedness as the English, who are accused of selfishness.

As no people has ever met with so much ingratitude, the result might have been foreseen. Ireland has never hated the English more furiously than she has since 1850. I have before me, as I write, a chronological list of rebellions, murders, crimes of every description committed in the name of the national cause; one can hardly believe that it applies to this century. I have already filled a book with a summary of contemporary crimes, the history of three years of Irish anarchy, from 1906 to 1909.¹ The remainder would make an endless list. O'Connell died in 1847 and was no longer there to restrain passion, and contain his people within the bounds of legality, and once more the Irish cause was stained by violence.

Another confederate now comes on the scene.—America. A powerful colony of Hibernians was founded in the United States by the great tide of emigration from 1840 to 1860. America has been ever since the most powerful supporter of rebel Ireland, the refuge of her outlaws, the instigator of her plots. She has procured the funds, inflamed hatred, armed or coached the patriots who were detailed for special jobs.

As most of the professional politicians on the

¹ *La Démagogie Irlandaise*, 1906-1909.

other side are drawn from the ranks of the Irish, they have encouraged ill-feeling in the United States against England, the danger of which has often been prominent and has disturbed the best-intentioned American statesmen. On these occasions the British Government has shown a forbearance and patience, for which we should give them due credit. Ancient countries have the wisdom of the ages. They need it, for provocation has been great. In 1864 the New York Irish inaugurated the Secret Society of Fenians. Two years later it was accredited with 380,000 members in America alone. Their activity was prodigious, and in a few months they succeeded in inspiring terror throughout the Anglo-Saxon world. They tried their hand at everything ; they landed arms, committed murders all over the world, planned explosions and two invasions of Canada, attacked Chester Castle, laid siege to towns, garrisons, police posts, and coastguards, made an alliance with the Boers, blew up a prison in the middle of London, killing 150 innocent people, proclaimed the Irish Republic, issued paper money, etc. The Pope admonished the Catholics, President Grant took a firm tone, but no notice was taken.

The most characteristic incident of the whole campaign was the affair at Manchester in 1867. A prison van which was taking two Fenians from prison to court was attacked, the prisoners released, and a warder killed. Five of the assailants were arrested and condemned to death ; two were

reprieved, one of them because he was an American citizen ; the other three, Allen, Larkin, and O’Brien, were executed. These are now honoured as the Manchester martyrs ! their anniversary is fêtéed, they are held up as an example to Irish youth, and extolled in national school manuals. Every town in Ireland went into mourning, every church celebrated solemn requiems followed by huge processions. Irish patriots, who are reputed to have a great sense of humour—“ fellows of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy ”—yet contend quite seriously that these crimes are not crimes of common law, but political offences ; the only criminal part in the business is taken by England, who dares to defend herself.

The indictment is quickly forgotten, and the condemned man often excites more respect than his executioners. We who are so easily led away by the mirage of independence might be deceived by these sophisms, if we were not put on our guard by similar aberrations from which our Alliance suffered in 1916. On that occasion there was likewise rebellion, bloodshed—innocent blood—and then punishment. The day after the executions, solemn requiems were sung in Dublin churches for the martyrs of 1916, and divine vengeance was called down upon blood-thirsty Albion.

CHAPTER IV

AGRARIAN TROUBLES

WE will not waste time by trying to calculate in what proportion all the revolts of the past were in reality inspired by agrarian grievances. No popular upheaval has ever been exclusively religious, agrarian, or national ; if one or other element predominates, the others have always helped to swell the raging torrent. There is no doubt that agitators were largely helped by the sad and miserable condition of the Irish peasants.

These unfortunate people had good cause for complaint. The wholesale confiscations in old days had concentrated property in the hands of a small number of great nobles—not bad men, I admit, but absent for three-parts of the time, living in the capital or in more comfortable mansions in England. A hundred years ago Miss Edgeworth denounced this abuse in *The Absentee*, and Thomas Drummond enunciated his celebrated maxim, “ property has duties as well as rights.” The tenants were in the clutches of agents, who in no country have a reputation for gentle handling.

Besides, the best intentions could not have cured the radical vice of the system : in an over-populated island, without an industry to occupy the surplus

population, mainly laid out in pasture, which gives little employment and requires scarcely any labour, almost the whole population was reduced to the status of agricultural labourers on meagre pittances, and small downtrodden tenants, without prospects, without ambition, and without sufficient to live in comfort. It meant the inevitable atrophy of a whole race, and could no longer be tolerated in our modern democratic evolution.

If English legislators have never denied nor ignored their duties on this subject, they have naturally yielded to the fashionable ideas of their day, and at first they tried to remedy matters by philanthropic measures; such was the great Poor Law of 1838, and others which followed it. Even in 1905, when Ireland had recovered a relative prosperity, there were not less than 558,000 people receiving relief, either in the workhouse or in their homes. That makes one in every eight of the population. In 1838 the dangers of pauperism were not foreseen, and neither in Ireland nor England could these expedients be lasting solutions.

The peasant saw himself constantly threatened by two catastrophes: recurring famine, because cultivation on a large scale did not draw from the land all that it could produce, and dread eviction, which drove out without mercy the insolvent tenant.

In the face of such inequality at the hand of Fate, on the one hand a few privileged persons, on the other a mass of pariahs, justice could not

be too rigid. In the face of such cruel misery, the former class were rightly asked to resign some of their advantages, however legitimate, in order to relieve the disinherited. A fresh partition of property seemed essential. But a reform of this breadth could not be carried out in one day; the English are too fond of compromise, they have too much respect for tradition, to lay themselves open to the convulsions of 1798, or to fall into a slough of Bolshevism.

In order to deal with what was most urgent before turning the peasant into a peasant proprietor, the Land Act of 1870 was passed in order to protect him in his tenancy. In future the landlord had to indemnify his tenant—

- (1) In case of arbitrary eviction.
- (2) For improvements made by the tenant to the estate.
- (3) If he refused sub-letting or alienation of the tenancy.

This was not all that was asked for; a reasonable and legal fixing of rent was also demanded.

But it was a big measure of equity, marking a new era of concessions in a spirit of good augury, and promising future reforms and more ample reparation. Then as usual the Irish stepped in and muddled the whole business. Those promises of a golden age almost made us forget that we were in Ireland.

Those who fished in troubled waters were on the look out. Religious wrongs having been settled,

Fenian terrorism overcome and expiated, they had to look round for fresh pretexts and a new battle-cry. From what was poor Ireland suffering now ? From economic marasma, faulty agriculture, an antiquated partition of property. This was enough with which to open the campaign, and the agitators now took the agrarian movement under their wing. All titles to property were gone into, as far back as Henry II, Elizabeth, James I, or Cromwell. They declared that everything had been stolen and must be given back. The fat was soon in the fire. It mattered little that these properties had been taken from the Church, and that Mortmain would not be admitted by modern legislation ; or from clans which only allowed collective property, and could not transmit individual rights ; or from rebels lawfully despoiled according to the public law of the time. Three centuries of prescription could not avail.

Davitt adopted the formula—" Shoot down all landlords like thieves and rats " ; he was a survivor of Fenian plots, had escaped from prison and justice, and was an enthusiast blinded by savage exasperation.

Upon this programme Davitt founded his Land League in August 1879, profiting by fresh agricultural distress, consequent upon a succession of bad seasons. Just at this time evictions were all the rage, for the landlords, hit by the three clauses of the Act of 1870, but keeping the right to turn out those who did not pay rent, had thus an oppor-

tunity for revenge and used it freely. They thought themselves victims of an unjust law violating at their expense the common law of property, and by trying to make examples they were often cruel. Popular wrath was soon aroused.

At this point Isaac Butt, the leader of the Irish Parliamentary party, died; he was a prudent law-abiding man, a follower in O'Connell's footsteps. His successor, the famous Charles Stewart Parnell, was of another stamp, no less skilful than Butt or O'Connell at playing the game of obstruction at Westminster, but far more impetuous, remorseless and unscrupulous over the choice of methods, and openly encouraging propaganda by direct action. All the oratorical triumphs of one of the greatest of modern tribunes cannot make us forget that he had strange allies and encouraged ugly practices.

He consorted with Davitt, and in October 1880 became President of the Land League. Then he went to America and at Cincinnati pronounced his memorable ukase: "The first thing necessary is to undermine English power by destroying Irish landlords. Ireland might thus become independent, and let us not forget that that is the ultimate goal at which we all aim, to sever the last link in the chain which binds Ireland to England." This is the doctrine of total separation which neither his Parliamentary predecessors nor his successor Redmond ever dared avow so brutally.

When he returned home Parnell made his instructions still more definite. "To make an end of

evictions, we must punish any man who dares to take a farm from which another has been removed, by isolating him from his fellows as if he was a leper of old." This method, very ingenious because the law did not touch it, was adopted with enthusiasm, and applied instantly to all those whom the Land League denounced for public vindictiveness, landlords or tenants, agents, or shopkeepers, anyone who was ill-disposed.

The first victim was Lord Erne's agent, Captain Boycott, whose name has passed into an international vocabulary to denote the system. He had refused to give a receipt to some tenants who wanted to pay him less than the rent agreed upon. Everyone turned his back upon him, and his crops would have rotted for want of labour to harvest them, if fifty volunteers had not come to his assistance from Ulster, guarded by 900 soldiers.

Parnell had had an inspiration, the whole of Ireland relished the game ; it still is one of its calamities, and is always cropping up to infect life over there. The boycotted victim could get nothing to eat nor to drink in his neighbourhood. His affairs were ruined ; nobody would buy his cattle at the fair, the blacksmith would not shoe his horse, the wheelwright would not mend his cart. His friends gave him a wide berth when they passed and crossed themselves, his children were hounded away from the village school, no one would sit near him in church. Fathers dared not go into their son's houses ; a shopkeeper under

suspicion of having sold anything to the victim was deserted by his terror-stricken clients. If he were ill no medicine would be procurable; if he died no carpenter would make him a coffin, no sexton would dig his grave.

These amenities were so successful that the League had recourse to them in order to recruit its members. It had its tribunals, pronounced judgments, and woe to the lukewarm, the neutral, and the law-abiding. The Cowper Commission concluded its report in these words: "The people are more afraid of boycotting than of judgments of Courts of Justice." I leave to the imagination what capital could be made out of this system by personal spite, anonymous informers, and petty sly revenge.

At the same time the old violent methods were still in full swing, preferably mutilations of cattle, and that other national speciality "cattle-driving," which consists in turning cattle on to the roads at night and driving them far from their pastures. In 1881 there were 4,439 agrarian crimes of this kind. The League was all-powerful with local committees in the remotest corners of the island; there was even a Land League for women, and another for children. In spite of the pastoral letter of the Catholic Archbishop McCabe, reproving this terrorist agitation, there were no limits to their excesses.

In all crises of this nature, Ireland practises the same abuse, and the representatives of violence

are sure of the same protection ; that is, the impossibility of finding witnesses to give evidence or juries to convict ; justice is reduced to humiliating impotence. Hence the Government is always reduced to one of the following solutions, against which our honest Irish protest with equal indignation : either they have to pack the juries by keeping out the Roman Catholics, who are certain to be accomplices and not judges ; or they have to pass emergency legislation for summary suppression, without making use of the judicial formalities which the Irish have parodied ; or if they are at war, as in 1916, they proclaim martial law, and have order restored by a general who will take matters seriously. In all three cases Ireland says she is being persecuted and sets to work to venerate fresh martyrs.

Gladstone, who was nothing either of a tyrant or a judge, and who on the contrary encouraged too many insurrections by his ill-disguised sympathies, was overruled, and had to pass laws for public safety, a Coercion Act and an Arms Act, which forbade the carrying of weapons. But like a good Radical, more indulgent towards demagogic than towards established right and tradition, he at the same time granted to the Irish peasants a privilege which they had demanded in vain in 1870, and which was considered by many to be exorbitant. Ireland's agrarian charter is known familiarly as the three F's—"fixity of tenure, free sale, and fair rent." The law of 1870 had established the first

two; that is to say, it guaranteed the prolongation of leases by forbidding arbitrary eviction, and allowed the tenant to alienate his rights, or be indemnified by the landlord if this was opposed. There only remained fair rent: this was granted by the Act of 1881. The rent was in future to be fixed for fifteen years by a judicial decision in case of dispute between lessor and lessee, and after those fifteen years, upon the renewal of the lease another redress is open, either to the landlord to have his rent raised, or to the tenant to have it lowered. The former can no longer evict the latter except for default of payment, and on the whole the compulsory legal duration of fifteen years permits the tenant to sublet on much better terms. Is it necessary to lay stress upon the truly revolutionary character of these reforms? We are far from the Napoleonic code and other Western legislation.

In 1882, in order to get unfortunate men without resources out of difficulties, an Act of Arrears was passed, which made them a free gift of one year's rent up to the sum of £30. Finally from 1887 onwards, the insolvent tenant could remain on his holding for six months after the decree of eviction, with the option of selling or buying his holding during the interval. The landlords received no compensation for all these encroachments upon common law, and their property was all of a sudden considerably depreciated.

We may say that the Irish peasant now enjoyed

an unusual security, and would be envied by our countrymen—if happiness could be given by laws alone, and if individual qualities of initiative and perseverance were not worth a hundred times more.

Was Ireland satisfied at having obtained what she had demanded so often? Not a bit of it. The agitators, upset at seeing wrongs evaporate, began to invent others. Realising that the tenants looked like settling down, and giving the new regime an honest trial, Parnell, no doubt in obedience to his American supporters who did not want peace at any price, issued an interdict and did his best to make the law of 1881 a failure. Gladstone, indignant at this outrageous bad faith, lost patience and imprisoned Parnell and Dillon. There were plenty of pretexts, and hundreds of incitements to rioting and crime would have justified these arrests long before. The Land League retorted by enjoining the farmers to pay no rent, and the winter passed in a state of ferment.

All of a sudden, in May 1882, Gladstone, with one of his characteristic whims, repented him of his firmness, decided to change both personnel and policy, set the prisoners free, parted from two Ministers who declined to return to the feeble tactics previously tried—Lord Cowper, the Viceroy, and Mr. Forster, Chief Secretary for Ireland—and sent in their place Lord Spencer and Lord Frederick Cavendish.

The reply of the Leaguers was worthy of their antecedents. The two Ministers, representatives

of clemency and *laissez-faire*, arrived in Dublin on May 6th, 1882. That same evening Lord Frederick and his under-secretary Thomas Burke were walking in Phoenix Park, and were stabbed to death. This notorious crime was epoch-making ; it ought to have shown all future Governments once and for all that it is impossible to parley with terrorism, and that it is folly to pat a mad dog. Mr. Asquith and his Radicals ventured to do so once more, and misfortune overtook them ; no one was surprised by their disaster in 1916.

Gladstone, death in his soul, had once more to resign himself to stern treatment ; his Crimes Prevention Act of July 1882 was at last the triumph of common sense. There had been 2,597 agrarian crimes during the first half of that year ; there were only 836 in the second half. It killed the Land League, and another society, the National League, took up its rôle and its programme with no less hatred, but with rather more circumspection. When the Crimes Prevention Act, passed for three years, expired in July 1885, there were immediately 543 crimes during the second half-year as opposed to 378 during the first half, and three times more people were boycotted.

During the summer of 1885 Gladstone was replaced for some months by Lord Salisbury and a Conservative Government, and Ireland lost nothing thereby. She was treated to less rhetoric, but in exchange she was given a great practical and constructive law. It is as well to note that the con-

trast between the two parties has been accentuated since this time; the Liberals have been more and more inclined to treat Ireland to fine speeches and sloppy sympathy, encourage her in her tempers and excite her irritability; the Tories on the other hand never trifle with miscreants, insist upon submission to law and order before coming to words, but never refuse a conscientious and kindly examination of grievances, and in order to remove them stinting neither material sacrifices nor the concession of principles.

By the Land Acts of 1885 known as the Ashbourne Acts they proved to the demagogues that it is possible to give to the poor without robbing the rich as Parnell and Gladstone wished to do. With one step, after fifteen years of interventionist muddles, of Radical and Communist utopias, we have returned to the path of common sense.

To force a landlord to tolerate indefinitely a tenant who never pays him; to give the latter an unlimited right to sublet and to deny the landlord a choice of tenants, to tax the assessment of rent—all this may be very well-meaning, but it is a mockery of social peace and elementary economic laws. If you really wish to increase the number of small holdings, you must have the courage to curb popular acquisitiveness and pay honestly for what you are going to distribute. In two words, before you subdivide, purchase if possible, expropriate if necessary; this was done by Ashbourne's, Balfour's, and Wyndham's Acts.

In virtue of Ashbourne's Act the Exchequer advanced to the tenants £5,000,000 sterling to acquire the land of those landlords who were anxious to sell ; the purchaser to repay the State in forty-nine yearly instalments. The subsidy, doubled in 1888, was exhausted in 1891, but had given 25,000 former tenants possession of their holdings.

The success of this vast purchase system surpassed all hopes, but we must admit that the English leader ran a great risk in face of the troubled state of Ireland, her incurable contempt for Saxon laws, and the fact that the debtors denied the "usurpers'" right to any mortal thing. By toiling, learning, by paying their instalments regularly, by becoming more honest, more worthy, more interested in progress and technical improvements, the farmers proved that the Irish people is worth more than its leaders. Unfortunately in 1885 the leaders were still its masters, and Parnell the national hero.

The following year there arose a new factor in the situation, of the greatest importance for explaining the course of Anglo-Irish relations from 1886 to the present day, the interplay of parties, and the development of political programmes ; Gladstone returned to power with too small a Liberal majority, and had to supplement it by relying upon the eighty-two votes of the Nationalist party. Ireland was now the arbiter of the laws and government of her hereditary enemy. This

situation, with all the extortions which it brings in its train, has been repeated since on several occasions.

Gladstone was probably in favour of Home Rule before 1886, but he had been the head of the Cabinet for more than ten years before he dared to throw in his lot with this measure. This time Parnell would not allow him to shuffle, and he introduced the first Home Rule Bill on April 8th, 1886. It is unnecessary to enumerate the chief features of this abortive scheme.

A week later Gladstone paid the Nationalists the second half of his ransom, by proposing a perfectly iniquitous scheme for agrarian spoliation. He wanted to purchase in three years, in order to divide among the peasants, the properties of the Irish landlords at exactly half the valuation which had been put upon them at a recent census which had made a notoriously inadequate estimate. These expedients of a demagogue in distress met with a just return; England was not yet soft enough to capitulate to Fenians and boycotters. One of Gladstone's first lieutenants, Joseph Chamberlain, formerly an intractable Radical, suddenly fired by patriotism as Mr. Lloyd George has been in our day, sounded the alarm and withdrew his allegiance. Old John Bright, one of the glories of English Radicalism, did likewise; the dissenting Liberals took the name of Liberal-Unionists, and joined the Conservatives.

Besides this exchange of shots between the

parliamentary patrols there was another movement, we might almost call it a popular convulsion, which hastened the reaction of English public opinion.

Protestant Ulster, which we have had occasion to mention so frequently during the history of the two preceding centuries, had been fairly quiet since the Union of 1800. Her great moral and national interests were safe, and, feeling secure under Imperial protection, she had preferred to live in peace, working and developing her magnificent industries, rather than waste her time over the follies of her cousins in the south.

All of a sudden Ulster was roused. Her awakening was rude, the coalition of the great Liberal party and Parnell aroused all her fears. Was it not once more to be handed over in bondage to a Dublin Parliament, and no longer a Parliament like Grattan's, dominated and kept under control by London? When Ulster realised that she was to be betrayed, abandoned to Fenians, dynamiters, boycotters, there were terrible riots in Belfast from June to the following January, and England was warned that henceforth Home Rule would not save her from the Irish nightmare. The rising of Ulster and these Belfast incidents are the real point of departure of the whole modern phase of the Irish question.

Finally, on August 5th, 1885, in spite of the compelling eloquence and prodigious activity of "the Grand Old Man," the nation confided its

mandate to Lord Salisbury, and approved his programme of Irish policy—"twenty years of resolute government." The promise was kept, and an opportunity soon presented itself.

The Irish Land Leaguers, surprised by the defeat of their English allies, conceived fresh tactics known as the "plan of campaign." The peasants were ordered not to pay more rent than they considered reasonable, and if the landlord did not accept the offer, they were to hand over the sum to a committee of the League. The latter would then indemnify the evicted tenants from these funds. What Irishman could resist this temptation? He had no idea what the League meant to do with his money; an inquiry in 1892 exposed the fact that it had received £235,000, and had only refunded £125,000 to the evicted. The rest had been absorbed as a contribution to the national propaganda. That recalls the Irish-American who sent \$25 to Parnell, "\$5 for bread and \$20 for lead."

In face of this return to anarchy, a man arose to save Ireland in spite of herself, by a policy of justice and firmness. Lord Salisbury handed over the direction of Irish affairs to Mr. Arthur Balfour, one of the finest figures among modern statesmen. Ireland for a long time feared and vilified his name, but has ended by respecting it.

He began by displaying firmness; he suppressed the League, put rebellious districts under the iron heel of emergency laws, ran to ground criminals

and inciters to crime, took from them the privilege of being heard before corrupt or intimidated juries. Mr. Balfour had the sense to turn a deaf ear to all outcry, vituperations, false indignation, and sham pathos. His business was to restore order and see that the law was supreme—and the law *was* supreme. Ireland, whether she knows it or not, owes to him the foundations of her present prosperity, security for her capital and the protection of honest travellers.

On the other hand he knew when to show mercy to the unfortunate and justice to honest men. We have already quoted the Act of 1887, granting to the insolvent tenant a considerable period in which to reinstate himself. In 1891 Mr. Balfour, realising the good results of the Ashbourne Act, conceived a vaster application ; he obtained from Parliament a credit of £30,000,000.

A Congested Districts Board was authorised to distribute this sum, either where needs were pressing or where good opportunities for purchase arose.

This Board, which obviously plays a considerable part in the life of Ireland, has not by any means done what was expected of it. Mr. Balfour and his party, though opposed to the legislative separation of the two islands for strong reasons and in the highest interests, were yet most willing to grant Ireland a large share in self-government. They deemed it wise to arrive at this progressively and to begin by granting a moderate amount of

administrative autonomy ; the Congested Districts Board was the first attempt, and for that reason it had to consist of a majority of Irishmen. Mr. Balfour was soon undeceived. The Board was dominated from the first by cranks with economic theories, and by patriots who were more anxious to injure the English than to benefit their own people. Its influence and its millions were soon used as political instruments ; it forgot its primary object, and became a nest of intrigue.

The experience was useful none the less, and Mr. Balfour must be congratulated. Some are grateful to him for giving a practical demonstration that Ireland is in too great a hurry, and is not yet ripe for the longed-for autonomy. Others, the Irish, ought to thank him for this great concession, a first step towards the pathway of their dreams —but when will an Irishman thank an Englishman ?

In 1893 the Irish had another brief spell of delirious joy. Gladstone returned to power with a slender majority, once more at the mercy of the Nationalist vote, and brought in his second Home Rule Bill. It was more complex than the Bill of 1885 ; besides its Parliament at Dublin, Ireland was still to have eighty members at Westminster. They would not be allowed to vote on questions which only concerned England and Scotland, but Gladstone himself confessed that “it passes the wit of man” to draw a practical distinction between imperial and non-imperial affairs.

England has always a weakness for Liberal polities, but she could not tolerate being handed over to the mercy of eighty Irish rebels when their votes were needed ; Gladstone, attempting to put this yoke upon her for the second time, was angrily turned out. Ulster's cry of distress rang out once more, mass meetings were held everywhere, and the House of Lords threw out Gladstone's Bill by 419 votes to 41. The General Election of 1895 confirmed this verdict, and turned the Radicals out of power for ten years. The hereditary Chamber had interpreted the national will with more courage and loyalty than the demagogues.

Mr. Gerald Balfour succeeded his brother as Chief Secretary for Ireland, and proposed a new formula—"kill Home Rule with kindness." He began by the Land Act of 1896, deciding uniformly in favour of the tenantry several contested points in the Act of 1891, and giving them a number of small privileges, which amounted for the landlords to considerable sacrifices without compensation. For example there was the obligation to sell to the occupiers every bankrupt estate in the hands of a liquidator ; for all improvements to a property made since 1850, a legal presumption was given in favour of the tenant, etc.

Two more important works are due to Mr. Gerald Balfour—namely, a Board of Agriculture for Ireland, and the great Act of 1898 on Local Government.

The new Ministry was entitled the "Irish

Department of Agriculture and other Industries and Technical Instruction." To it were transferred the various functions which till then had been scattered among other ill co-ordinated Departments—management and distribution of subsidies, inspections, introduction of modern methods, organisation of professional instruction and education in general. The principal innovation was to hand over all this expenditure to Irishmen, and to Irishmen elected by their fellows.

His other work, the Act of 1898 on Local Government, starts from the same principle—that is to say, it lets the Irish more and more direct their affairs themselves. Mr. Gerald Balfour took up his brother's idea, and made it a success ; this reform gave Ireland the right to fix provincial rates and do what she would with them by letting her elect County and District Councils. It was an extension of the experience attempted by Mr. Arthur Balfour in his Congested Districts Board of 1891 ; a step farther, taken with prudence and precaution, towards the autonomy of the Nationalist programme.

Alas ! the practical results were not much more brilliant, for these Councils did little useful work, and much base and fruitless agitation. Inaugurated in 1899, they at once seized the opportunity to demonstrate to the conciliatory Empire the furies of Irish hatred ; almost all of them passed resolutions insulting the Crown and sympathising with the Boers, and at every English

reverse they publicly applauded the victorious enemy. During those dark days of defeat Ireland really tasted unmixed joy.

The generosities of the British Parliament, agrarian or political concessions, far from appeasing bitterness, only made the Irish more greedy and more threatening; in spite of receiving their due, they made more exacting demands. As all landlords did not despoil themselves at the same moment, and as they had to wait for opportunities to purchase; some counties and some tenants got satisfaction quicker than the others. And the latter became jealous and got tired of waiting.

In 1898 there appeared the most recent of the agrarian leagues, the "United Irish League"; soon every self-respecting patriot belonged to it. It demanded two things—the suppression of pasture lands, and compulsory purchase—the radical expropriation of recalcitrant landlords. "Force the landlords to sell us their land." It had recourse to all the violent methods of earlier leagues, boycotting, refusal to pay rent, and so on.

The landlords, weary of these continual fights, summoned the leaders of the League to confer with them, promised them that they would be only too glad to sell if they were only better compensated, and they agreed to submit to the Government proposals emanating from both parties; the result of this was the last great agrarian law, the Wyndham Land Act, or Irish Land Purchase Act of 1903. This heroic measure opened an enormous credit, first

of all estimated at a total of £100,000,000 and later at £180,000,000, raised by annual loans of £5,000,000 on London. The landlords who sold and tenants who bought could debate their price freely and have it ratified by three Estates Commissioners.

The Treasury gives the seller an addition of 12 per cent. on the price. The purchasers no longer pay off by annual instalments for forty-nine years, as by the Act of 1885, but at sixty-eight and a half years' purchase—that is to say, at 8½ per cent. per annum on the capital advanced by the State to the landlord. In a word, the State purchases outright with English money the whole of the Irish land to hand it over to the natives, and takes all the risks of non-repayment, of economic crises, and of political revolution.

Any other country but Ireland would have been profuse in its thanks. People sometimes venture to compare the Irish to the Poles of Posen and the landlords to the Junkers, but they forget that the laws of Herr von Bülow have the opposite effect, by expropriating the natives in favour of imported colonists—after the manner of James I, and Cromwell, but without the excuse of having insurrections to put down.

From this date agrarian grievances—if not discontent—have disappeared, and I will bring my summary to an end. The number of evictions fell from 5,200 in 1881 to 670 in 1895. Up to 1906 fair rents had been judicially fixed to 480,000

holdings, with an average reduction of 20 per cent. (see *Report of Irish Land Commission, 1905-6*) : the total reduction amounted to more than £6,000,000.

But lastly, and more important than all, the Irish people has changed its social condition. Of about 550,000 occupiers, 74,000 had already become owners under Acts passed before 1903. It is calculated that 240,000 others will profit by Wyndham's Act. Almost half the land under cultivation in Ireland has already passed, or is about to do so, from the landlord to the tenant. This measure has changed the face of Ireland. The Act of 1903 has brought about the only happy transformation which English legislation has ever effected in Ireland. This was recognised on November 23rd, 1908, in the House of Commons by two men who were not over-indulgent to the Conservatives - Mr. Birrell, the Liberal Chief Secretary, and Mr. W. O'Brien, the founder of the United Irish League.

This was a piece of good legislation, a promising evolution on wise and sound lines. But troubles continued, and we will speak of them again later on, for Anglophobe politicians and separatists did not intend giving up this weapon, and they wanted, in spite of all that had gone before, to protest against grievances which no longer existed and against abuses which had been already removed. They have been given the land ; they now ask for the moon. Faster, faster, expropriate everybody, down

with the landlords ! Certainly, but must selfish England foot the bill again ? Elsewhere I have said on this subject : " Either this expropriation would be robbery and confiscation — that is to say, it would not give an equitable return for the value of the land — or it would be financially impossible." In those days we were not acquainted with the experience of the idealist cranks in Russia or the felicities of Bolshevik expropriation. Mr. Birrell, the Radical Minister, and crony of the Irish demagogues, tried in 1908 to satisfy them. He paid due homage to the admirable results of Wyndham's Act, but he did his best to make it unrecognisable. The premium to the landlord was in future to be no more than 3 per cent. The seller was in future not to be paid in cash, but in Government securities at their nominal value, in spite of the disappointment caused by this same clause in 1903. As naturally the landlords would not show much enthusiasm for a transaction of this nature, their consent was to be dispensed with ; the three Estates Commissioners and the Congested Districts Board were to settle all these purchases as they chose with coercive power, they alone were to fix the price of sale, and were to make symmetrical holdings, were to transplant peasants who had no desire to leave their native village, and so on.

The projects of Mr. Birrell have failed lamentably, as was predicted. Why in the name of heaven could he not remember Gladstone's misfortunes, and the disastrous failure of dishonest

laws of spoliation ? In six years under Wyndham's Act 115,000 tenancies had been purchased, that is 19,000 a year. Birrell's Act in three years only liquidated 2,154, no more than 700 a year.

However that may be, we have shown in this summary how much truth there is in the statement that England has done nothing for Ireland. Nothing ? How about forty-three Acts or amendments between 1860 and 1904 ! The Irish must be joking. Particulars and details of the various Acts mentioned may be open to criticism by punctilious jurists or politicians on the make, but they do not lessen the generous spirit which permeates the mass of these reforms.

What evidence can be better than that of John Redmond, speaking in 1915 in his town of Waterford to Irishmen from Australia ?

"I went to Australia to make an appeal on behalf of an enslaved, famine-hunted, despairing people, a people in the throes of a semi-revolution, bereft of all political liberties and engaged in a life-and-death struggle with the system of a most brutal and drastic coercion" . . . (We will omit his exaggerations).

"Only thirty-three or thirty-four years have passed since then, but what a revolution has occurred in the interval ! To-day the people, broadly speaking, own the soil ; to-day the labourers live in decent habitations ; to-day there is absolute freedom in the local government and the local taxation of the country ; to-day we have the widest Parliament in the municipal franchise ; to-day

we know that the evicted tenants who are the wounded soldiers of the land war, have been restored to their homes or to other homes as good as those from which they had been originally driven. We know that the congested districts, the scene of some of the most awful horrors of the old famine days, have been transformed, that the farms have been enlarged, decent dwellings have been provided, and a new spirit of hope and independence is to-day amongst the people.

"We know that the towns legislation has been passed facilitating the housing of the working-classes. . . . So far as the town tenants are concerned we have this consolation, that we have passed for Ireland an Act whereby they are protected against arbitrary eviction, and are given compensation not only for disturbance from their homes, but for the goodwill of the business they had created—a piece of legislation far in advance of anything obtained for the town tenants of England. I may add far in advance of any legislation obtained for the town tenants of any other country.

"We know that we have at last won educational freedom in university education for most of the youth of Ireland, and we know that in primary and standard education the thirty-four years that have passed have witnessed an enormous advance in efficiency and in the means provided for bringing efficiency about. To-day we have a system of old-age pensions in Ireland whereby every old man and woman over seventy is saved from the workhouse, free to spend their last days in comparative comfort. We have a system of national industrial insurance which provides for the health of the people, and makes it impossible for the poor

hard-working man and woman, when sickness comes to the door, to be carried away to the work-house hospital, and makes it certain that they will receive decent Christian treatment during their illness."

Poor Ireland ! Cruel England !

CHAPTER V

APPROACH OF THE CRISIS, 1906-16

SUCH was Ireland's past. She has suffered much, and she has often suffered from her own faults. She has indulged in recrimination with or without reason, she has gorged herself with racial hatred, and prided herself on her violence. Those who know her well; those who see her at close quarters, assure us that nothing has changed. The fact that she now rebels against oppression which no longer exists makes one inclined to believe that her insurrections in the past had no better justification.

Is not the psychology of this race baffling — chafing under caresses, more discontented at every effort to satisfy it? We ought to give some consideration to the Irish character in order to explain these paradoxes, but you can judge of it by deeds. The Irish and their friends will tell you that they are not bad at heart; that may be, but it is unfortunate that appearances so often oblige them to protest their innocence. I am sorry to say that in this respect I cannot profess that indulgent sentimentality which only pities the miserable rebels.

But surely, you will say, are not some of the

revolts justified ? Caresses have their charm, says the mastiff in the fable, but the chain is there ! Is this true of Ireland in the twentieth century ? Is it possible that she really believes herself to be justified ? Unfortunately there is no doubt that she is made to believe it. But for ourselves, why should we be deceived as to the justification of these grievances ?

In our summary of this question, complex as are all national questions, we have come across three elements, the religious, the agrarian, and the political. We have seen that the first two have been removed. We shall be reproached for having forgotten a fourth, the sentimental ; it certainly plays a great part in the patriotism of the mystic and impulsive Celts. As a matter of fact it is principally a plaything in the hands of political leaders.

There are still some religious fanatics and dissatisfied peasants, but their accusations are too fanciful nowadays and too unreal to carry much weight. The politicians are the only people who pay any attention to them, and they use them to substantiate their pleas.

What are these politicians after ? Cynics will say they want to be members of Parliament and councillors, to get profits and perquisites out of a proletariat which is so easy to deceive and intimidate. But they are eloquent—with a Latin eloquence, the sounding phrase and oratorical gift unfamiliar to the English—and they vow that they are going

to die for independence, for the nation, for their country. They do not all lie, for some of them have indeed died ; and those who die for a good cause, even for a good illusion, always deserve respect. But on the other hand, all of them do not die ; they take good care to survive in order to watch over the spoils. Ah ! when there is a Parliament in Dublin, then they will not be members, they will be ministers, secretaries of State, magistrates, treasurers ! What a vision of Arcady !

Away with these petty suspicions, and let us give these men all the credit we can. But we must not be surprised if Ulster, which sees it all at closer quarters and has greater interests at stake, jeers at our confidence and does not share it.

The present Irish question, after all agrarian and religious grievances are eliminated, is in the last resort nothing but a political question of autonomy, separation of two races, and the creation of a new State. But this new State ought to comprise Ulster, who will not have it at any price. And thus you have two Irish questions instead of one, the question of Ireland and the question of Ulster.

We have insisted upon the distant historical origin of this schism, we have seen the conflict calm down after 1800, and flare up again in 1885 through Gladstone's fault. The parliamentary necessities of the English Liberal party have brought about the present impasse which we will describe.

In 1906 the Liberals had a great triumph, the country repudiated Chamberlain's scheme for

Imperial protection. No other subject had been mentioned during the electoral campaign, and it was evident that those returned had neither asked for nor received a mandate to grant Home Rule to Ireland. Two of the new Ministers had the courage to confess it.

Mr. Asquith, on January 4th, 1906, said that their majority had been given them to defend free trade. To endeavour to use it in order to introduce Home Rule would be a political dishonesty. . . . The Government would take steps to give Ireland a more enlightened and liberal administration. And Sir Edward Grey said the same day that the great question of this election had been free trade ; they had been elected for that, and it would not be loyal to profit by it in order to establish an Irish Parliament, but that they were free to develop local government in Ireland.

The Liberal majority was a safe one. With the support of Nationalists and Socialists, Campbell Bannerman's Cabinet had 354 more votes than the Unionists ; without those allies he still had 104 more votes than all opposition combined, and therefore he was no longer the slave of the Irish vote as Gladstone had been. But the Government's tenderness for Ireland was never in doubt. Most of the members of the Cabinet were Gladstone's former lieutenants, and convinced Home Rulers ; the son of the Grand Old Man was of their number. The new Viceroy, Lord Aberdeen, had already held the same post in 1886 ; the new

Chief Secretary for Ireland, Mr. James Bryce, a noted jurist and historian, was appointed in the following year Ambassador to Washington, where his Irish sympathies made him specially welcome. All these Gladstonians were bound sooner or later to take up the favourite schemes of their former leader : moreover, they had all sworn to do so when in opposition. It was merely a question of time and opportunity.

"Ireland is quiet," said Mr. Bryce when he took office. A year later Mr. Birrell declared that Ireland was more peaceful than she had ever been for six hundred years. It was true, thanks to their predecessors. The unfortunate thing is, that when one party is turned out it is the fashion to abuse the best work it did, and to try to do something different for the pure pleasure of contradiction. That is what was about to happen.

In 1906 nothing very striking occurred ; the parties were settling down and taking stock of one another. Then very soon the Nationalists wanted some rewards—first of all a new personnel in the administration at Dublin, men who were agreeable to them, and who would shut their eyes to their leagues and boycottings.

In 1907 Mr. Bryce went off to the United States and his place was taken by Mr. Augustine Birrell. Mr. Birrell is a wit, and an amusing essay-writer, a lawyer and man of letters, a good speaker and not a bad fellow—he has no enemies—but too dilettante to understand that Ireland sometimes

needs to feel that she is being governed. It took him nine years to learn that you cannot trifle with cattle-lifters and armed rebels, and that weak indulgence is culpable; it took the rebellion of 1916 to arouse him from his placid dreams. His invariable formula was to allow Ireland an autonomy *de facto* while waiting for its constitutional sanction—but an autonomy quite different from that of the county councils and so on, with which up to now she had been content. He simply put himself in the hands of the Nationalists, and whatever they approved or condemned, the Minister endorsed; he was inspired by their slightest wishes, took their advice and served them as a man of straw. As for the results, he went by what they told him and everything seemed to him to be for the best in the best of all possible worlds. I will now tell you something of the men in whom he placed his blind confidence, and something of the facts, the gravity of which he denied in order to please them.

Agrarian reforms, especially those of 1903, had brought about in Ireland not only a material but a moral revolution. Tenants and landlords had come in contact over negotiations for purchase, had usually exhibited mutual good feeling, and their traditional animosity had given way to a spirit of peacefulness. At one moment there was really some emulation to repair the ruins; Ulster and England were delighted to see signs of a practical spirit, unknown before, among the Celts, and

they thought it promised to be Ireland's salvation. The principal business men of the island—Lord Iveagh, owner of the famous Guinness breweries, and Lord Pirrie, head of the huge shipbuilding yards at Belfast—offered to subsidise between them a motor service to open up the poorer and more remote districts where railways would not be likely to penetrate. Lord Castletown started again propaganda for local industries, which had decreased lamentably, by a great exhibition of national industries. Good seed was sown, men were at work, and they hoped to reap the harvest. Between 1895 and 1905 deposits in the savings banks had doubled.

Lord Charles Beresford opened a club in London for Irishmen of every opinion; Londoners even wore shamrock on Saint Patrick's day. The two countries had begun to understand one another, perhaps they might end by mutual liking. At this point the politician intervened. Alas! Ireland is incapable of resisting the appeal of agitators and extremists. The politician reasoned on the following simple lines: he saw that this good understanding damaged his prestige, and that there was no room for him in this harmonious concert. He raised his traditional alarm. "We shall be seduced by benefits—away with benefits! If the English are good to us, and if we accept their bounties, how can we still abuse them in order to demand independence? Who will bother about independence if everything is working

smoothly without it? We must see that things do not work smoothly." Let Ireland perish sooner than Nationalism!

This crusade was preached as early as 1903 by Mr. John Dillon. Mr. Dillon is now the leader of the Nationalist Parliamentary party since Mr. Redmond's death in 1918. He is sixty-seven years of age. In his youth, in the days when as Parnell's favourite he was imprisoned with him for misdemeanours of the same kind, he was the type of the Irish extremist. I should not like to say that he is so no longer; during the war he made some very disquieting speeches.

In 1903, then, Dillon attacked the leaders of the Nationalist party who were willing to make a loyal attempt by means of the Wyndham Act to give the people at last the land they longed for so dearly. Dillon thought them feeble and foolish. He took upon himself to see that conciliation failed, confessing quite openly his aim and his objects. He harried especially the Anglo-Irish nobility and landlords who were most benevolent to their tenants, vowing that he would make them tired of their benevolence and making no effort at concealment.

No sooner was the Act passed than he organised skilful obstruction in order to nullify the working of it. As it was necessary for the purchase to obtain an annual loan of £125,000,000 from English capitalists, Dillon did his utmost to discourage them and discredit the whole business by stating

in the House of Commons that the Irish peasant would never pay his annuities and that the English investor was taking a perilous risk. Mr. Wyndham, having foreseen a deficit, calculated on being able to reduce the estimate for the police by £6,000,000, by cutting down the number of constables by 2,000 now that the island was so much more peaceful. The opponents instantly provoked cattle drives and agrarian crimes without the least excuse, and succeeded not only in preventing any reduction in the constabulary, but actually had it reinforced at an extra expenditure of £2,500,000. Finally, Mr. Dillon knew that the land legislation of 1908 would annul all the good effects of the Wyndham Act, and for that reason he approved it. In April 1910 Mr. O'Brien announced that he had negotiated with Mr. Lloyd George for a reduction in Ireland's contribution, and had found the Chancellor of the Exchequer quite prepared to do it, but Mr. Dillon had deliberately put a spoke in the wheel.

Was I not right in saying that Irish discontent is more or less a manufactured article ?

Since Mr. Birrell's regime, these tactics have had free play. From 1906 to 1908 crimes against property rose from 20 to 89 ; agrarian crimes from 20 to 128 ; non-agrarian crimes from 36 to 65 ; cattle-driving from a negligible number to 681 ; the number of persons put under the permanent protection of the police from 196 to 335.

From 1905 to 1908 attempts at murder rose

from 11 to nearly 100 ; crimes committed by means of explosives or fire-arms from 61 to 213 ; cases of boycotting from 162 to 874 (Mr. Birrell for his part only counts 197 current cases of boycott and does not include those which achieved their aim during the year—that is to say, came to an end owing to the submission of the victims). All this is done in broad daylight ; the leagues hold their assizes, announce their judgments, the papers publish them with threats and openly proclaim an interdict against peaceful citizens without any steps being taken by the Government. A “Saturnalia” of crime, groans one magistrate. What does Mr. Birrell think of it ?

His reply is characteristic : “ I will not simply, even for the sake of getting a few more convictions than I have been able to do up to the present time, break up the great Liberal tradition and break up my own hopes for the future of Ireland.”¹ He therefore released, after a fortnight, men who were condemned to three months’ imprisonment. This was hardly an encouragement to the Bench.

For the rest, he quibbled, and thought there were fewer crimes than in 1887—he forgot that his police had orders not to be too zealous, and to tolerate a variety of things which formerly would have been severely repressed. Pressed by apprehensive questioners, he forgot himself and said a foolish thing, “ It is the duty of the Irish people to protect their property in person.” What

¹ House of Commons, February 23rd, 1909.

could be more encouraging for the tax-payer ! Why should they pay taxes for police ? The Chief Secretary also declared that boycotting is not of much consequence. The unfortunate victims were no doubt of a different opinion ; among hundreds of others, Mr. Harris Martin, who could not go out without being surrounded by seven policemen—or any other landlord who, not wishing to sell his property at a loss of 50 per cent., saw his ricks burned, his beasts mutilated, his servants stoned, had shots fired at himself after dark, etc. . . . Mr. Birrell thought that was all quite peaceful. Decidedly Radicalism does not engender good faith—which is quite natural, since Radicalism means prejudice.

Ireland has thus been handed over to the mercy of the leagues. Mr. Dillon and his friends are supreme. Mr. Redmond, who tried to protest in 1903, gave in long ago ; Mr. O'Brien, who protested, had to leave the party.

I can give you another example of this ill-feeling and systematic obstruction. In spite of all the agitators, Ireland was on the way to become prosperous once more very speedily. One of her good geniuses, Sir Horace Plunkett, had at last given her good advice ; told her to work and reorganise her economic life by counting on herself and not upon the State as Providence. Politics could wait, they could come back to them later. Sir Horace did more than speak ; he put his back into the business, and created an admirable net-

work of agricultural co-operative societies, country savings banks, etc. His sincerity, disinterestedness, conviction, and experience inspired everyone with confidence and overcame all obstacles.

Where was he to raise the money to start these schemes ? Once again from the so-called selfish English—the great co-operative union of Manchester ; in other words, the English working-man consented to advance the necessary funds.

As the result of untiring devotion and in spite of the greatest difficulties, success was within reach. In 1908 the Irish Co-operative Society had 100,000 members, with a capital of £50,000,000—a splendid result for small cultivators of modest resources, most of them insolvent. In 1907 Irish trade showed an increase of £100,000,000 and of deposits in banks and savings banks in proportion.

Ireland, with better days in prospect, was perhaps going to cease to complain ! Instantly Sir Horace was suspected by Dillon's party, and the professional politicians performed prodigies of cunning in order to damage his work. As he always found them across his path, he had told them some biting truths in 1904 in his remarkable book *Ireland in the New Century*. Having left Parliament in order to do something better than make futile speeches, he taunted them with wishing to revolutionise society before improving the individuals composing that society. Heaven knows that the Irish lower classes were backward in the extreme ! The two systems were irreconcilable, and

it was made quite plain to him ; Campbell-Bannerman's Radical Cabinet lent itself to the intrigue with the basest ingratitude.

The Conservatives had put Sir Horace at the head of the Department of Agriculture as the most competent man for the post, and he had proved his worth ; the Nationalist rabble ordained that he should be turned out in 1907, and the Liberals obeyed their behests with regret after the manner of Pontius Pilate. On the other hand, he had based his plans for co-operation upon a society of which he was the soul, the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society, and the Conservatives had realised its importance so keenly that they had allowed him a subsidy of £4,000 a year. The Nationalists had this removed in 1907 as a reward for twenty years' service. The Irish peasant would have to pay for this pettiness, but what of that ? Plunkett and his prosperity were thorns in the flesh of the agitators.

In two years the peace of Ireland had gone to the deuce. Satisfied with their good work, the Nationalists were emboldened and took a high hand, demanding from the Cabinet that it should instantly introduce a fresh Home Rule Bill. Mr. Birrell asked nothing better ; but as we have seen, Mr. Asquith had made some embarrassing declarations on this subject at the time of the last elections. The time had not yet come when the English voter could be treated as a negligible quantity. Yet there were some remarks made

during the debate on March 30th, 1908, which are worth noting.

Mr. John Redmond, the Irish leader, concluded with these words :

" Now, I ask, what argument against Home Rule remains ? Honestly I know of only one, and that is an argument which, put nakedly, would revolt the feelings of every man in this House—I mean the argument of fear—fear of the injury that Ireland with her 4,000,000 might be able to do to this nation of over 40,000,000 if the Irish people had placed in their hands some measure of self-government. Sir, that argument is unworthy a great nation." ¹

In the name of the Unionists Lord Percy retorted :

" There remains only the argument of sentiment : ' Trust the Irish people and you will be rewarded with their enthusiastic loyalty.' Judicial separation, which is ordinarily regarded as at best a regrettable remedy for the evils of matrimony, is in the case of Ireland to be the means of effecting a ' union of hearts.' That is the language used in England and on English platforms, but in Ireland legal separation is advocated as the prelude to divorce, and to the realisation of Mr. Parnell's ambition to ' sever the last link which binds Ireland to England.' It is hardly surprising if, under these circumstances, we prefer to incur the slight inconvenience which arises from incompatibility of temper to running the certain risks which we should incur if we allowed our partner to set up business on her own account, and contract possibly

¹ House of Commons, March 30th, 1908.

a new alliance at our own lodge-gates with any enterprising neighbour who happened to have an eye to our plate and jewellery.”¹

1916 and the Irish-German alliance have shown which of the two was in the right.

We should also note, as a new element in the problem, this sentence of Mr. Asquith’s :

“ I have always regarded what is called Home Rule in Ireland as part and parcel . . . of a more comprehensive change. The constitutional problem . . . is to set free this Imperial Parliament for Imperial affairs, and in matters purely local to rely more and more on local opinion and local machinery.”²

Here we have the present bearing of this question of Irish or colonial autonomy, which henceforth is embraced in the vast conception of Imperial Federation.

By way of legislation during this period, besides the Land Act of 1908 of which we have seen the disastrous effects, Ireland obtained a Roman Catholic University, officially recognised, and afterwards Old Age Pensions, the greater part of the expense of which falls upon the English tax-payer.

All of a sudden in 1909 there came a thunderbolt. The House of Lords had just thrown down a challenge to the Radical-Socialist coalition, by throwing out Lloyd George’s revolutionary Budget.

¹ House of Commons, March 30th, 1908.

² *Ibid.*

He had to go to the country. The election which took place in January 1910 gave the Unionists 111 more seats than in 1906, and the Liberals had 98 fewer. But the result could be interpreted in two ways ; the Radical majority which fell from 384 votes to 124 still remained a majority. The true conquerors were the Irish ; for the third time they became the arbiters of British politics. Another weapon had been put into their hands, for the conflict which raged round the powers of the House of Lords seemed to them full of promise ; were not the Lords responsible for having forced Mr. Gladstone to submit his plans to the electorate on two occasions, and have them rejected ?

If Mr. Asquith wanted to take away from them this right of referendum, what could be better ? said the Nationalists. We hold the stakes, we are masters of Mr. Asquith, we will make him do the trick and bring in Home Rule, and the Lords will not be able to appeal to the country any more. Mr. Redmond boasted about it in America at the Irish Convention at Buffalo in 1910, while Mr. Asquith was holding forth on the dignity of democracies.

" I believe that the present leaders of the Liberal party are sincere. Whether they are sincere or not, we will make them—and we have got the power to do it—we will make them toe the line." This was done logically, coldly, cynically. The Parliament Act of 1911 first of all suppressed the veto of the Lords : the breach was made, it only re-

mained to go through it. Mr. Asquith made out that the electors of 1910 gave him a sufficient mandate, a general mandate to destroy anything he chose, including Imperial security. In parenthesis I must tell you that Mr. Asquith had not even drafted his Home Rule Bill, and he did not introduce it until April 1912; how could he maintain that the electors of 1910 had approved a text which was not in existence? No, the English electorate had not given the blank cheque which they were supposed to have done; the real question was never brought up, it was evaded. The truth was another matter, and the Prime Minister had the courage to recognise it. "In introducing the measure the Government would be acting in strict fulfilment of pledges openly or deliberately given"¹—the pledges of a party without a clear majority, which could not keep its power except by buying the eighty-four Irish votes. I will tell you how they were to set about it, and what they were to pass.

First of all comes the question of procedure. It was certain that the Lords would throw out the Bill when passed by the Commons. According to the Parliament Act the latter have to discuss it again, and vote on it again after three readings. The Lords reject it again, and so on for three times. After the Lords have vetoed it for the third time, their consent is dispensed with and the Bill becomes law automatically.

¹ Speech to his constituents in Fife, October 21st, 1911.

The principal clauses of Asquith's scheme were the following. An executive was to be set up in Dublin, a Senate and a House of Commons, with the right to legislate for the peace, order, and good government of the country. They were not competent to deal with *dynastic questions—the army, navy, treaties, and other subjects of Imperial interest.*

To the Parliament at Westminster was reserved control of the operations for land purchase described above, old age pensions, Irish constabulary, Post Office savings banks, public loans prior to the present legislation.

The Dublin Parliament was to be strictly prohibited from endowing, favouring, or persecuting and penalising, directly or indirectly, any religion whatsoever.

Finally every law was subject to the Viceroy's veto, and could in the last resort be annulled by the Imperial Parliament. Irish representation at Westminster was reduced from 102 to 42 members.

Financial organisation was evidently the most important point; in regard to that the English took still more precautions. The English Treasury was to continue to receive all taxes and customs, except those of the Post Office. It would hand over to Ireland the necessary quota for the services for which she was responsible, a quota which was to be fixed by a joint commission. Dublin would have the right to set up or abolish a tax, but if it chose to raise or reduce it, that was not to modify

the quota which London would take for Imperial services.

I must point out that under the Union which the Irish are so anxious to abolish Ireland costs the Imperial Treasury more than she brings in ; the annual deficit is about £50,000,000 and increases every year as a result of land purchase, social legislation, workman's insurance, etc. The Irish try to make out that the deficit is due to extravagant administration by the English, and they refuse to accept the debts of their inheritance. Mr. Asquith agrees, and even gives the new Irish Government a free gift of £12,500,000 a year for the expenses of establishment.

Such is the great conquest of national autonomy which the Nationalists extracted from the Radical Cabinet. The reader will no doubt be surprised at their moderation, not to say their humility. What, is that all ? All that shouting about so little ? For this Constitution, taking it all round, is more humiliating than the Union of old. If it is no longer a state of tutelage, at all events the responsibility has remarkable limitations. There was therefore much wrath with its negotiators—smothered in Ireland (for there they were masters of the League and the League did not permit criticism), fierce in America. A disapproving cablegram was sent from the powerful society in the United States with the ambitious name of Clan-na-Gael, and signed by six judges of the Supreme Courts of New York and New Jersey,

by a Governor of Rhode Island, by four judges of the secondary Courts of New York, Municipal Courts, etc.¹ The Clan-na-Gael, which has been from early days the soul of Anglophobe conspiracy, had always provided the funds, and felt that it had been duped.

But, looking more closely into the matter, say the Unionists, our American cousins are wrong to get excited about it. What really signifies in a Constitution is not the spirit which created it, nor even the accuracy of the text, but the spirit with which it is applied ; policy resolves itself in the last resort into administrative action just as law does into judicial interpretations. Looked at from that point of view it is rather the Unionists who have cause to fear !

It is so easy to find thousands of trivial ways of annoying when one is steeped in hatred. Even by a budget of inoffensive aspect it would be possible to put pressure upon Ulster, with whom there are old accounts to settle. It is so easy to cause injustice as between English and Irish in hundreds of spheres : trade marks, copyright, diplomas, and many more. The Irish programme has always included Protection against England : in order not to alarm their friends the Liberal Free Traders, the Nationalists do not refer to it now, but who would count on that ? The Celtic

¹ It is not surprising that magistrates of high rank should appear in such a list ; these American judges are chosen like our mayors and councillors in districts where the Irish voter rules the roost.

imagination is a fertile one ; it will invent some way of penalising English imports in favour of American—or now, alas ! German imports.

See what happens during the war. The question of food supplies is vital, and Ireland is one of the principal sources for over-populated Great Britain. If she refused to send over her surplus potatoes, dairy produce, meat, bacon, what a catastrophe there would be ! Well, without Home Rule, she tries to play this scurvy trick ; the Sinn Feiners intimidate the farmers who want to export their pigs, and vow that if they were masters it would be their supreme joy to starve the accursed English. The old motto still triumphs, “England’s difficulty, Ireland’s opportunity.” William II has able supporters there ! I am not even referring to all those military alliances with the enemy from Queen Elizabeth’s reign to our days ; we shall see farther on that Mr. Dillon scarcely conceals it.

Mr. Asquith, so we are told, foresaw all that in his Home Rule Bill ; he included in it all the desired guarantees and safeguards ; the last word will always rest with London. Is that the case ? In point of fact it is impracticable. Provision for this veto has always been made in all the constitutions of autonomy granted to the colonies, but it has never been possible to apply it. English Free Traders have had to submit humbly to Canada’s customs dues ; Conservative ministers have had to allow Australia to indulge in socialism. Under

present conditions any reprimand or intervention on the part of the Imperial Cabinet would bring about a conflict which no one would venture to risk ; and yet the colonies are well disposed to the mother country, as has been shown by the splendid voluntary help which they have given her since 1914.

What would happen in the case of Ireland ? It would be civil war without a doubt. Her leaders have promised it often enough, and they are not in the humour to tolerate supervision of this kind. We have just had an edifying example of the sort of thing which would happen. Remember that the Bill of 1912, with Mr. Redmond's express consent, reserved strictly to the Imperial Parliament all matters concerning the army and navy. On April 9th, 1918, after the reverse at Saint Quentin, Mr. Lloyd George, when he decided to call up Englishmen to the age of fifty-one, and even if necessary to fifty-six, wanted at the same time to apply conscription to young Irishmen of twenty-one, for the contrast was too unjust and could not be justified any longer. Immediately there was a terrific storm from the Nationalist benches !

“ You have no right to do that without the consent of an Irish Parliament.” Of what value is the promise made to Mr. Asquith concerning the “ reserved services ” or Imperial services ?

No, all those imposing safeguards stipulated in the Bill only make old political philosophers like

Mr. Balfour laugh, and no doubt they amuse Mr. Asquith himself. Others, Ulster Protestants, or English patriots, clench their fists, only too certain of persecutions and treason in the future.

The Nationalists will be the heads of the new Dublin Government. What do they undertake to do? Can their promises be relied on? In April 1912 Mr. Dillon, quite mild all of a sudden, said:

“For my part, as long as I live in Irish politics, I will adhere honourably to that pledge and will do everything in my power to discountenance any idea that we intend to use this Bill as a leverage to extract more out of England, or that we are not content to accept the position which is the basis upon which this Bill is founded.”¹

In 1911 Mr. Redmond asks for an Irish Parliament to deal with purely Irish affairs, “subject to the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament.” If the Nationalists are sincere, remind them that Gladstone himself confessed that he was incapable of distinguishing between Imperial and non-Imperial matters.

But the Unionists do not believe in this sincerity. They call to mind other declarations, more brutal, more outspoken, uttered when it was not necessary to tread warily, to lull suspicion; for instance, Mr. Redmond’s speech at Kanturk on November 17th, 1895:

“Ireland for the Irish is our motto, and the consummation of all our hopes and aspirations

¹ Speech to the University of Dublin, April 1912.

is, in one word, to drive English rule, sooner or later, bag and baggage from the country."

Again, in 1893, in the House of Commons, he said that there was no hope of success if the decisions of the Irish Legislature were to be submitted to the Imperial Parliament as a Court of Appeal, either directly or indirectly.

Thus spoke the chief; now let us listen to his lieutenants. This time it is Mr. Kettle, an honest man, the leading economist of the party, a scholar rather than politician, reassuring his American friends : "These are our tactics—if you want to capture a fortress, first take the outer works."

And now we have Mr. Devlin, President of the great secret society, "The Ancient Order of Hibernians," possibly the most powerful man in Ireland, speaking at Philadelphia. "I believe in the separation of Ireland from England—until Ireland is as free as the air we breathe."

Finally Dillon, the unruly member of the party. His friends have often reproached him for talking too much, and with good cause ; confessions like this are certainly very embarrassing to-day :

"I strongly advise the Irish people to provide themselves with arms," he said in effect in the House of Commons. "The Irish people have not the necessary means to carry on civil war. I wish that they had. In old days when a more efficacious weapon was used, one or two landlords were chosen out, fired at with a rifle, and that had better results than all your constitutional agitation."

In the same House in 1898 he pinned down his leader :

Mr. Dillon : " You spoke of the repeal of the Union, and the reopening of the Irish Parliament, as the full Nationalist demand. Now, I say, in the first instance, that, in my opinion and in the opinion of the vast majority of the advanced Nationalists of Ireland, that is not the full Nationalist demand."

Mr. Redmond : " Separation."

Mr. Dillon : " Yes. That is the full Nationalist demand ; that is the right on which we stand, the Nationalist right of Ireland." ¹

A member reminded him in June 1912 of another of his vows :

" When we come out of the struggle we will remember who were the people's friends and who were the people's enemies, and we will mete out our reward to the one and our punishment to the other." ²

It is not very reassuring for Ulster !

Such is the man who in 1912 gave " honourable " pledges, who in 1918 was elected leader of the Parliamentary Nationalist party.

In July 1912 *Irish Freedom* wrote :

" Above all, in the transitory and half-way house stage, it will keep a sharp eye on ' Sister England's ' administration of the Home Rule Bill and it will devote its special attention to the using of that Bill

¹ House of Commons, February 11th, 1898.

² Mr. Joynson-Hicks, House of Commons, June 11th, 1912.

as a means to strengthen Ireland and weaken the British Empire, in so far as it can be worked towards that end."

That can hardly be described as legitimate defence, can it ?

This Fenian newspaper is merely playing the part one expects of it. But the contradictions of a man of Mr. Redmond's standing are more disturbing. In October 1911, speaking at Manchester, he said : " We are not asking for the repeal of the Union, but merely for an amendment of its terms."

That is all very well. He was speaking before English people. Why, then, was he so imprudent as to sign this in his *Freeman's Journal*, December 16th, 1908 ?—" We have before us to-day the best chance which Ireland has ever had of tearing up and trampling under foot that infamous Act of Union."

Which are we to believe ?

We might fill volumes with threatening quotations such as these ; they would at least make us appreciate why English Unionists distrust these wolves suddenly camouflaged as sheep. Then there is past history, seven centuries of hatred ! no light matter. Then there is that morbid spite which is no longer justified, which the English neither understand nor share, but with which they are obliged to reckon every moment ; a perpetual insult—worse, vows of unappeasable revenge. Can we reproach them for being on their guard ?

CHAPTER VI

THE PRICE OF A BARGAIN

IN this traffic between Radicals and Nationalists there was a victim. Was it the Empire ? No ; that is big enough to lose a bit of territory and to defend itself when necessary. Was it England ? No ; the English voter, gagged until the next election, that is to say for some years, had no one to blame but himself for not having foreseen the turn events would take, and had only to take it as became a sportsman. But what of Ulster ? There it was no more a matter of the interplay of parties, of skilful Parliamentary combinations, it was a matter of life and death, of a race to be given over to reprisals, sworn on a hundred occasions, to be subject to a rival whom she not only execrates, but despises, and she gives you very good reasons for it. Sold by English demagogues to their Irish fellows, Ulster hung out a signal of distress, and armed for resistance. Some rights are more sacred than laws.

From July 1912 there had been bloody collisions between Roman Catholic and Protestant workmen at Belfast, and on one occasion at a big football match there were a hundred wounded on the field. But the movement was soon to outstrip these local

fights and take on other proportions, to become truly national—for Ulster is a nation—and imperial, for the Empire cannot look on while her best sons are put up for auction.

A man arose to give effect to these two aspects, one of the leaders of the English Bar, endowed both with an iron will and with some of the best brains in the kingdom—Sir Edward Carson. He had become the spokesman of Ulster; in the cottages of Catholic Ireland he is suspected of being anti-Christ, and he is never mentioned without the sign of the Cross or an oath. His adversaries have never denied that his loyalty is perfect, but his inexorable logic annoys them exceedingly. Few leaders have been more hated by their enemies and none has served a cause with more firmness, courage, and good sense.

Carson began his campaign by a series of great public meetings, big processions with bands and banners, Orange demonstrations, etc. All the Unionists of the district marched in them, big manufacturers, ordinary workmen, landowners, and farmers. The Ulster question was opened.

What does it consist of? We have seen whence came the Presbyterian population of the north-east of Ireland, drawn from Scotland and planted by James I. I have summarised its principal conflicts and vicissitudes, racial and religious hatred.

It is important not to confuse it with the other section of Irish Unionists which is of English descent, from the nobility, from officials, and from the soldier-

farmers of Cromwell's day. This latter party has kept from its origin the religion which was for a long time the only one permitted to courtiers—Anglican Episcopalianism ; the King's Court were compelled to belong to the official Church called in the three kingdoms, Church of England, Church of Scotland, Church of Ireland. Although scattered about the island at the caprice of conquests and royal favours, they are called Southern Unionists, in order to distinguish them from Ulster Unionists. They are hardly less important politically and socially, for they comprise hereditary powers, the majority of the nobility and Anglo-Irish aristocracy ; but they are less numerous and more widely dispersed, and in a certain quarter they are treated as a negligible quantity from a systematic contempt for heredity. Their influence has moreover decreased considerably since they gave up their property to the natives.

Ulster is composed otherwise ; she forms a complete nation comprising all classes of society. She is practically the only part of Ireland which can seriously be called industrial. Her capital, Belfast, the largest town in the island, has a population of 400,000, nearly 100,000 more than Dublin ; her celebrated specialities are her linen trade and shipbuilding.

We are now touching upon another point in the great question of Ulster, upon an element which we have so far subordinated to the claims of race and religion, but which the nineteenth

century, as elsewhere, has changed into a preponderant element—the economic question. Leaving the Southern Celts to moan and whine with tub-thumpers and agitators, to curse England while at the same time begging for help from her, to vex the landlords and invoke the State as Providence, Ulster has contrived to grow prosperous, more prosperous than the whole of the rest of the island put together—and that too, we cannot repeat too often, under the same political fiscal and Customs regime which her unproductive fellow-countrymen abuse at every turn.

Ulster is the gem of Ireland. Without her the financial stability of the new State would be impossible: unfortunately, to the great indignation of the Nationalists, she declines to be part of it at any price! She refuses to be the milch-cow of hostile politicians, whose methods, bias, programme, and incompetence are alike odious to her. She has known them for so long and at such close quarters that her fears probably have some foundation. She reasons as a business man or as a banker, who does not neglect his precautions for the finest promises in the world. The Nationalists promise her every sort of toleration and security. She will have none of it.

"We have come into Ireland," said a Deputation from the Belfast Chamber of Commerce which waited on Mr. Gladstone in the spring of 1893, "and not the richest portion of the island, and have gradually built up an industry and commerce

with which we are able to hold our own in competition with the most progressive nations in the world. Our success has been achieved under a system and a polity in which we believe. Its non-interference with the business of the people gave play to that self-reliance with which we strove to emulate the industrial qualities of the people of Great Britain. It is now proposed to place the manufactures and commerce of the country at the mercy of a majority which will have no real concern in the interests vitally affected, and who have no knowledge of the science of government. The mere shadow of these changes has so depressed the stocks which represent the accumulations of our past enterprise and labour that we are already commercially poorer than we were."

The Protestant working-men in Ulster think likewise ; they appear in force at every demonstration by the side of their masters.

The Nationalists covet greedily this fine spoil from which the best part of their finances would be drawn. It would be easy to squeeze her, since numerically this rich corner would only be defended in the Irish Parliament by one-quarter of the total number of members. That is exactly why these obstinate Scots will not undertake the adventure ! Ulster has not the smallest doubt on the subject ; she knows what lies in store for her. Let us glance at the words of one of her most moderate spokesmen, Lord Ernest Hamilton ; I summarise his clear and precise reasoning.¹

¹ *The Soul of Ulster*, by Lord Ernest Hamilton, pp. 107-39 *passim*.

"The Protestant attitude is often stigmatised as being uncompromising. It is uncompromising. . . . The fundamental idea at the back of the Ulsterman's attitude is that what has once happened may well happen again. [He has just described all the massacres of the eighteenth and seventeenth centuries.] . . . Such occurrences invariably take the form of systematic attempts to rid the country of the British element by any and every means. . . . The soul of the native Irish has not at the present day changed by the width of a hair from what it was in 1641 and again in 1798. . . .

"The only attraction of Home Rule to the inner soul of the Irish (especially in Ulster) is the hope that it will provide the machinery by which the British colonist can be got rid of and Irish soil revert once more to the Irish. . . .

"In Ulster, then, the cry of 'Ireland for the Irish' is not the mere innocent expression of a laudable patriotism; it has a deeper and far more sinister meaning. It means the expulsion from Ireland of the Protestant colonists, and is so understood clearly by both sections of the population. There are no sentimental illusions in Ulster whatever there may be in England.

"Among the Irish of the South and West the popular conception of Ireland under Home Rule may be said to be, and in fact is, nebulous. The aspirations of the peasant, when reduced by persuasive inquiry to concrete form, will generally be found to stop short at a kind of Pan-Celtic Arcadia, where all will be rich on a minimum of work and a maximum of whisky supplied by American millionaires. . . .

"In Ulster, however, a very different spirit

broods over the land. . . . Half the lands of Ulster, and these the best and the richest, are in the hands of the stranger within the gates. It matters nothing that the lands when originally granted were waste, and that the industry of the colonists has made them rich. . . . The natives know none of these things ; they are not politically educated on these lines. . . . And so they cry, or, rather, they mutter under their breath, 'Ireland for the Irish,' a cry which becomes freely translated into 'to hell or to the sea with every bloody Protestant.' . . . Two *prima facie* questions arise :

(1) "Are the aspirations of the native Irish for a restitution of their forfeited lands justified ?

(2) "Would Home Rule give practical expression to such aspirations ?

"The first question obviously opens up problems which reach far beyond the case of Ulster. It touches, more or less, the whole civilised world. Should England be evacuated in favour of the Welsh, the relics of the ancient Britons ? Canada in favour of the Red Indians ? New Zealand in favour of the Maoris ? Should the French clear out of Algiers, the British out of Uganda, the Spanish out of the Argentine ?

"The second question at once raises more practical issues than the first. Would Home Rule result in attempts to dispossess the Protestant settlers of their footing in Ireland, and if so, how ? The first part of the question can be shortly disposed of. *The attempt would be made* ; it has been made on every occasion in the history of Ireland on which the native element has been in the ascendancy, and it would be made again. . . .

"*The attempt would not be made*, by methods

of open violence, but by more characteristic methods of which the more conspicuous would be as follows :

(1) " Petty injustices and persecutions which may be further sub-divided as follows :

(a) Taking the Parliamentary representation ;

(b) Establishing native officials in every executive and remunerative post in the country.

(2) "Agrarian outrages.

(3) " Tammany methods (shameless political corruption, blackmail, intimidation, violence, by which the Irish have made the Municipal Corporation of New York notorious).

" Such have been the native methods from time immemorial. . . . They are the fighting methods of the race, to which the fear of conviction and punishment have always been the only deterrent ; and under Home Rule neither convictions nor punishment would follow. Magistrates, constables, judge and jury, would be on the side of the perpetrators."

This is Ulster's idea of Home Rule, and we agree that the picture is not an attractive one. It is easy to laugh at it and describe it as fanciful, but history—and that is why I have made a point of reminding you of it briefly—history of the past and of the present, does not gainsay them.

Ulster is quite happy in her Union with Great Britain ; she has the most profound reasons for dreading separation and the yoke which will be

imposed upon her. By what right is it to be imposed? There is only one pretext, the "unity of Irish nationality, Ulster is an integral part of Ireland." Nothing more fatuous can be conceived. It is the logic of more than one nationalism, lucubrations emanating from the brain of three or four professors, poets, ethnologists, geographers, and so on, which end by creating in masses which are perfectly amorphous and apathetic an "irresistible movement," with the help of priests, lawyers, and school teachers. German science and intrigue have produced not a few of these brilliant fabrications.

The case of Ulster is by far the most artificial example, and those who cannot see it must be shutting their eyes to facts. Moreover, the Nationalists betray their confusion on the subject, and alas! also their bad faith. They do not even try to reason; they assert, they threaten. As they are masters of the Parliamentary majority at Westminster, they are content to give orders without mincing matters.

Mr. Dillon said: "The thing the Protestants of Ulster cannot bear to accept is equality with their fellow-countrymen,"¹ or again: "The people of Ulster will have to come down from that proud eminence, bow their lofty crests, and accept equality with their fellow-countrymen."²

In plain English that means that Ulster must

¹ Speech at Carlisle, June 1912.

² Speech at Barnsley, May 1912.

submit to being strangled in the Dublin Parliament by three votes to one.

Ireland does not form one nation, replies the Unionist, but two nations sharply divided by race, religion, and politics. There are no reasons justifying a Nationalist Parliament at Dublin which do not similarly justify a Unionist Parliament at Belfast. Ulster does not even want that; she simply asks to stay united to Great Britain and be ruled by the Government in London. Why should she not have the right to remain as she is?

What reply can be given to the following conclusions of the late Duke of Devonshire?—

“The people of Ulster believe, rightly or wrongly, that under a Government responsible to an Imperial Parliament they possess at present the fullest security which they can possess of their personal freedom, their liberties, and their right to transact their own business in their own way. You have no right to offer them any inferior security to that; and if, after weighing the character of the Government which it is sought to impose on them, they resolve that they are no longer bound to obey a law which does not give them equal and just protection with their fellow-subjects, who can say—how, at all events, can the descendants of those who resisted King James II say—that they have not a right, if they think fit to resist, if they think they have the power, the imposition of a Government put upon them by force?”¹

¹ *The Life of Spencer Compton, eighth Duke of Devonshire*, by Bernard Holland, C.B., vol. ii. p. 250.

This is what Ulster is compelled to do to her great regret, and the Conservative party, the old defender of established order and of the Constitution, agrees with her and promises her support. On September 28th, 1912, Sir Edward Carson appealed to all his partisans, and 218,000 men signed a solemn covenant at Belfast not to recognise the authority of a Dublin Parliament. A covenant is a *religious* vow and not a catchword for electioneering advertisement. Those who know the dour resoluteness of the Scottish character, without exaggeration and without vain boasting, realise that the vow will be kept and that nothing will bend them. Those forces are not easily stirred, but woe to those who resist them !

Carson began to raise an army of volunteers, and imported arms, rifles, bayonets, and munitions in all the villages of eastern Ulster, working-men were practising drill and rifle-shooting with enthusiasm. Mr. Asquith and his Radicals, who began by laughing at the whole thing, soon discovered that the time for speeches and shifts had passed. There was hesitation in the ranks. Anæsthesia was tried, the invalid was to be put to sleep. Lord Loreburn, the Lord Chancellor, suggested a conference for conciliation. Mr. Churchill mentioned possible amendments, and promised Imperial Federation, Home Rule for everybody, believing that the word "Imperial" would seduce the Ulster patriots. Sir Edward Grey suggested autonomy for Ulster within autonomy for Ireland.

It was too late for all these palliatives, Ulster had no longer any confidence in this political jugglery. Carson refused a conference which could lead to nothing (events proved that he was in the right), and appointed Lieutenant-General Sir George Richardson Commander-in-Chief of the Ulster Volunteers ; he reviewed 100,000 men outside Belfast.

Finally, in September 1913, the Unionist Council of Ulster adopted a distinct Constitution of Provisory Government in preparation for the day when Home Rule would become law. A million was raised by a subscription to indemnify the victims of the approaching struggle, the disabled, widows and orphans. In England a committee prepared an organisation to receive refugees from Ulster, who would have to flee before the horrors of civil war—the organisation was so thorough that a few months later Lady Lugard offered it to the Government for the Belgian refugees, and for a long time it was their principal refuge.

Everything was therefore ready for the fray, and to such a pitch that on March 1st, 1914, it was announced that the ranks of the Ulster Army, consisting of 111,000 volunteers, were full and that no further recruits were to be enrolled. English public opinion was profoundly stirred, and Liberal orators felt very conscious that their audiences did not approve of them. It might have been possible to defend a measure of generosity towards

Nationalist Ireland, but it was contrary to John Bull's idea of common sense to sacrifice to this defiant, hostile rebel a vast population which was perfectly loyal and friendly. Therefore Mr. Asquith, though refusing to solve the question by a general election or a plebiscite, consented to offer the following concession on March 8th.

As some counties in Ulster, namely those in the west, were not Unionist, it would not be just to treat the province as a homogeneous whole ; that agreed upon, each of the Ulster counties might, by a vote with a bare majority, decide whether it wanted to be under London or Dublin. This was a delightful proposal with which everyone would have agreed . . . but it was to be a beautiful dream without the reality. At the end of six years everyone was to fall into line, and the refractory counties were to be compelled to revert automatically under the law of the Dublin Parliament. By the same amendment the right of Protestant Ulster to decide her fate was recognised, and yet after a short interval it was to be taken from her !

In the name of his fellow-citizens Sir Edward Carson refused this sentence of death of which the execution was postponed for six years, and afterwards stated his final conditions : he accepted the proposed geographical division, though it was a bad dissection, for there are many Protestants in the counties which would pass under the Nationalist thumb, and many Catholics in the others.

But if he submitted to the democratic injustices of the bare majority, he insisted that at least this minimum of equity should be durable and definite, and not revocable.

This declaration will be historic, for it is probable that any future solution of the Irish imbroglio will have to take it into account. Nationalists and Liberals, dismayed at seeing their plans upset by this resistance, moaned daily "Ulster is unreasonable," and reproached Carson for his extreme intransigence. They forgot that he was master of the situation, and might exact much more at a time when the Government was changing its tune, hesitating, and offering a compromise. Was he not meeting them half-way when he accepted the stupid verdict of the bare majority in questions of independence and of national existence? Is there another Constitution in Europe which would be satisfied with it?

However that may be, Carson's reply was very badly received. Mr. Redmond and Mr. Churchill, the great military strategist of the Liberal party—oh shade of an illustrious ancestor!—called to arms, to the great dismay of Mr. Asquith and the old Gladstonians, who are not bellicose. Did they expect Ulster to retreat? Sir Edward Carson immediately took up the challenge, and on March 19th, after the Commons had voted against his final recourse to a referendum, he solemnly left the House amid the applause of his party, announcing that he was going to Belfast to put

himself at the head of his friends and await events.

The days which followed were stormy ones. The day after Sir Edward's departure, orders were received at the Curragh for troops to hold themselves in readiness to march on Ulster. The Secretary of State authorised the officers to leave the army if they did not wish to take part in the expedition; a hundred of them resigned their commissions.

The Government, angrily questioned in the House, vowed that it had only wished to take the simplest precautions to protect public buildings. The Secretary of State for War ordered those officers who had resigned to rejoin their regiment, and General Gough, commanding at the Curragh, returned from conferring with his chiefs in London and announced that he had a promise in writing not to have to send the cavalry brigade to Ulster. Instantly the Radicals protested against the "military camarilla" and forced Mr. Asquith to repudiate the promise given by the Secretary of State for War, Colonel Seely, and countersigned by General French, Chief of the Staff, and General Ewart, his chief staff officer. In short, there were contradictions, misunderstandings, and muddles, followed by the resignations of Seely, French and Ewart, etc. On his side Mr. Churchill, the First Lord of the Admiralty, as ever on the look out for martial glory, raised another storm by sending a cruiser squadron to Belfast.

All this precipitated the change in public opinion already noted above; and Mr. Asquith, the subtlest orator in England, again adopted a conciliatory tone, protested that the fears of Ulster were vain, that before six years had passed a vast system of Federation would extend over the whole Empire and would ensure every guarantee to Ulster, etc. Sir Edward Carson, coldly sceptical, was not convinced, and spurned the proposal. His view amounted to this :

“ It is not we who ask to make any change. Do not include us in Home Rule, let the Nationalists make their experiments in practical government without us. If they do well, if they dissipate our fears and reassure us, they will win us by persuasion, as I wish with all my heart that they may do. When we have seen them at work, if they keep their fine promises of wisdom, toleration, social and economic progress, loyalty and goodwill towards our mother country, we shall be happy to co-operate with them. But not before. We know only too well on what our suspicions are founded ! ”

Mr. Asquith gave it up; bullied by his creditors the Nationalists, he stuck to his original scheme, his amendment, and the six-years’ clause. The House of Lords, on the other hand, making use of what little initiative remained to it, adopted a motion of Lord Lansdowne’s to exclude the whole of Ulster, including the western counties. This scheme was no more justifiable than the Nationalist

claim to the Unionist counties ; Lord Lansdowne has never shown much sagacity with regard to Irish problems.

The new conflict between the two Houses of Parliament marks the culminating point of the crisis, and it was hard to see how the Government could avoid resorting to force. But to what force ? The regular army had failed : the only alternative was the army of National Volunteers which had just been started in Dublin, modelled upon their rivals in Belfast, with the official approval of Mr. Redmond and his lieutenants.

In face of imminent civil war King George made a final attempt at pacification, and summoned to Buckingham Palace eight leaders of the English and Irish parties. Unfortunately, on July 24th, 1914, the Conference broke down on the question of the delimitation of the counties which were to be excluded.

At that moment other clouds were banking up on the European horizon, and grave questions brought about a truce in this intestine quarrel. The diplomatic tension of the end of July, growing apprehension, dread of the gigantic drama which was to be performed, finally the enthusiasm of August, the unanimous rising of the whole British nation for the defence of the weak and for Right, all made the Irish squabbles and the servile manœuvres of the Radical Cabinet appear infinitely paltry in comparison.

At Westminster, as at the Palais Bourbon, the

hour was poignant, vows were sublime, union was to be sacred. There was to be an end of spite, intrigue, individual or national selfishness. Carson told his volunteers at once to go and fight in Belgium, and Redmond himself recognised with true nobility that our cause was just and must take precedence of his. A united front was presented to the barbarous enemy, and very fine it was.

Alas ! democracies have their organic vices, and the truce did not last long ; we shall see that the Irish policy of the Asquith Ministry had a sad epilogue.

CHAPTER VII

IRELAND DURING THE WAR

THE English Parliament, faithful to its resolutions, gave for six weeks a fine example of concord and moderation ; the victory of the Marne was a consolation to all, and everyone had forgotten political chicanery, when all of a sudden Mr. Asquith made a most unexpected move. Thinking that his adversaries were distracted by their patriotic emotions and the grave preoccupations of the world-struggle, the Prime Minister thought fit to profit by it to steal a march on them.

The amendments proposed by Mr. Asquith to appease Ulster had satisfied no one, but when war broke out the House of Lords was still examining them and trying to correct them by counter-proposals. Whatever might be the outcome of any of them, one fact stood out as a result of this long struggle between the two Houses : the Government had recognised the necessity of giving Ulster a certain measure of satisfaction. So long as this measure was insufficient or indefinite, Ulster had remained on guard—until August 4th, 1914 ; since then on the contrary her patriotic self-denial had disarmed her.

On September 14th the Prime Minister announced that the Government was going to present the Home Rule Act for the Royal signature without amendments, but would not put it into force until after the war. As for the amendments, he promised, but without specifying them, that he would introduce them in a separate Bill during the following session. You can imagine how indignant the Unionists were at this bombshell. In a word, Home Rule became law, and instead of amendments there was nothing but promises ! And what promises ? Mr. Asquith began by breaking his pledges of March 9th and the express conditions of the party truce concluded at the outbreak of war.¹ *The Times* wrote that once again Mr. Redmond had compelled our Ministers to toe the line.

Sir Edward Carson that same evening issued his manifesto "to the loyalists of Ulster" :

" By an act of unparalleled treachery and betrayal the Radical Government, at the dictation of their Nationalist allies, have announced their intention of passing into law, without discussing the Amending Bill which they themselves introduced, the detestable Home Rule Bill, which we are pledged to resist at all costs. They are taking advantage of the situation created by the war, which threatens the very existence of the United Kingdom and the Empire, to inflict upon us this degradation and humiliation. The Government

¹ Speech by Mr. Bonar Law, September 15th, 1914.

have thought it an opportune moment, when a great number of members of Parliament are serving their country and so many of our own people have nobly responded to Lord Kitchener's appeal, and when, therefore, we could not enter upon resistance without injuring and weakening our country, to seek a party triumph without any regard to national interests. The infamy of such a proceeding will, I know, sink deeply into the heart of every loyal and patriotic man, and will, I am sure, act as a stimulus to the fight to the finish which we have covenanted to carry out.

"But I ask my followers in Ulster to remember that this is not the action of the nation, but of a despicable political faction, and our duty at the present moment is towards our country and the Empire. 'Our country first' is and always has been our motto. We must, therefore, notwithstanding this indignity, go on with our preparations to assist our country, and strain every nerve to defeat its enemies.

"But you may rest assured that we shall not slacken for a moment our efforts to be prepared, when our country is out of danger, to carry out our covenant to the end. I once more promise to go straight on with you in the fight, strengthened by the belief that Great Britain will never forgive the base treachery of the Government.

"We will not have Home Rule—Never.

"EDWARD CARSON."

September 15th, 1914.

Comment seems superfluous. For want of anything better we will recall some of the promises

made during the debate on September 15th, and first of all we will quote Mr. Asquith :

"The employment of force, any kind of force, for what you call the coercion of Ulster is an absolutely unthinkable thing."

Then Mr. Bonar Law, leader of the Unionists :

"They said to themselves 'Whatever we may do, they are bound in a crisis like this to help their country. Whatever injustice we inflict upon them we can count upon them.' It is not a pretty calculation, but I would like to say, with the whole authority of our party, that it is a correct calculation—they can count on us."

Finally, Mr. Redmond spoke in the name of his Irishmen :

"This moratorium which the Government propose is a reasonable one. . . . There are two things that I care most about in this world of politics. The first is that the system of autonomy which is to be extended to Ireland shall be extended to the whole country, and that not a single sod of Irish soil and not a single citizen of the Irish nation shall be excluded from its operation. Let me say . . . that the second thing that I most earnestly desire is that no coercion shall be applied to any single county in Ireland to force them against their will to come into the Irish Government. . . . Catholic Nationalist Irishmen and Protestant Unionist Irishmen from the North of Ireland will be fighting side by side on the battlefields on the Continent,

and shedding their blood side by side. . . . The result of all that must inevitably be to assuage bitterness and to mollify the hatred and mis-understanding which have kept them apart, and I do not think I am too sanguine when I express my belief that . . . we may have been able by this process in Ireland to come to an agreement amongst ourselves whereby we can suggest to the Government an Amending Bill which they can easily accept and ratify. . . . In my opinion it will be the highest duty of every Irish Nationalist . . . during that interval to cultivate sedulously the spirit of conciliation, to suppress the voice of faction, sectarian strife and hatred, and to unite, as I hope we will be able to unite, all the sons of Ireland in the great task which this war imposes upon our nation. . . . In the past the Irish people have furnished a larger quota by far, in proportion to their population, than the people of England or Scotland . . . What, I ask you, will be the record now that the sentiment of the whole Irish people undoubtedly is with you in this war?

"For the first time—certainly for over one hundred years—Ireland in this war feels her interests are precisely the same as yours. She feels, she will feel, that the British democracy has kept faith with her. She knows that this is a just war. She knows, she is moved in a very special way by the fact, that this war is undertaken in the defence of small nations and oppressed peoples. . . . The manhood of Ireland will spring to your aid in this war. . . . I do not think it is an exaggeration to say that on hundreds of platforms in this country during the last few years I have publicly promised, not only for myself,

but in the name of my country, that when the rights of Ireland were admitted by the democracy of England, then Ireland would become the strongest arm in the defence of the Empire. The test has come sooner than I or anyone expected. I tell the Prime Minister that that test will be honourably met. . . . I would feel myself personally dishonoured if I did not say to my fellow-countrymen that it is their duty, and should be their honour, to take their place in the firing line in this contest. . . .

“ Just as Botha and Smuts have been able to say that the concession of free institutions to South Africa has changed the men who but ten or a little more years ago were your bitter enemy in the field into your loyal comrades and fellow-citizens in the Empire, just as truthfully can I say to you that by what of recent years has happened in this country with the democracy of England, Ireland has been transformed from what George Meredith described a short time ago as ‘the broken arm of England’ into one of the strongest bulwarks of the Empire.”¹

Thus spoke the leader, and he spoke well. I have thought fit to quote his speech fully, for it is so fine that one would like to see in it the act of faith of a nation. Mr. Redmond had just made similar promises to Cardinal Mercier, who passed through London on his return from the Conclave : “ We shall avenge Belgium ! ” I believed in it, just as others did, and so firmly that although I had made up my mind to write this book for

¹ House of Commons, September 15th, 1914.

three years, I kept putting it off, hoping to the end that Ireland would not go back on the signature of her proxy. Not a voice was raised from the Irish benches to repudiate Mr. Redmond, not even Mr. Dillon's.

Yet, even from that day, a paragraph in Mr. Redmond's speech ought to have given a warning :

"*The Times* in an article to-day, says : 'a Nationalist Ireland still disowns her gallant soldiers, flaunts placards against enlistment, and preaches sedition in her newspapers.'

"That is a cruel libel on Ireland. The men who are circulating hand-bills against enlistment, and the men who are publishing little wretched rags once a week or once a month—which none of us ever see—who are sending them by some mysterious agency through the post in this country and day by day to members—these are the little group of men who never belonged to the National Constitutional party at all, but who have been all through, and are to-day, our bitterest enemies. If you take up these wretched rags you will find praises of the Emperor of Germany in the same sentence as are denunciations of my colleagues and myself."¹

Then the disloyal were merely exceptions ? Very well, that may have been so, but then why are they to-day the favourites of Irish opinion ? Mr. Redmond has died recently, mortified by the default of his people who did not keep the promises

¹ House of Commons, September 15th, 1914.

he made on their behalf. What followed ? His successor, Mr. Dillon, has thrown off the mask which impeded him, and has joined the men who are publishing little "wretched rags."

At the end of September Mr. Asquith, accompanied by Mr. Redmond, had a great welcome in Dublin, and Mr. Redmond repeated his call to arms.

"Her right to autonomy has been conceded by the democracy of Great Britain, and therefore Ireland will feel bound in honour to take her place side by side with all the other autonomous portions of the King's dominions in upholding her interests."

This time Mr. Dillon and Mr. Devlin on the same platform announced their complete agreement. A few days later Sir Edward Carson and Mr. Bonar Law spoke at Belfast in their turn : "Drop politics for the moment and serve your country."

Ulster recruited well. In the rest of Ireland there was rather more confusion, and it is impossible to say exactly what happened. It appears from Mr. Redmond's declaration that he wanted two separate things : an "Irish Brigade" which would go and fight on the Continent with Irish officers only, and perhaps if possible under the green flag with the golden harp ; and a corps of "Irish Volunteers" for the defence of the island—that is to say, that under this pretext the arming of the National Volunteers who had been recently preparing to subdue Ulster should be continued.

Did he imagine that the British authorities would give arms to equip what was after all a corps of partisans of doubtful integrity ?

The War Office showed no enthusiasm in encouraging these two schemes according to the demands of the Irish. It gladly accepted recruits from Ireland on the same conditions as the others, to draft into the heroic Irish regiments which were already in existence ; but not to let them form a separate brigade, and to make stipulations as to where they chose to fight, etc.—in short, to excite still further the old spirit of separatist rivalry.

The Nationalist leaders, seeing that their people did not respond to the appeal as they had promised, required nothing more to make them put all the blame for their failure on the War Office, and on the usual English stupidity. This insinuation appears for the first time in a speech of Mr. Redmond's at Waterford on October 11th, 1914 : a fortnight of propaganda had sufficed to show him that among his fellow-countrymen there was an indifference and a hostility which augured ill.

On October 31st, after two months of friendly reticence, *The Times* decided to lend him a hand and speak openly. It asked why a meek Government allowed the multiplication and free distribution in Ireland of quantities of dangerous and seditious leaflets, which conjured the peasant not to sell his soul for the Saxon's shilling, not to help England out of her cruel difficulty, to abstain

from an English war so long as the Germans did not disembark on the island It asked why Mr. Birrell, smiling as usual, allowed so much freedom to these scribblers, while the censorship was so severe for English newspapers. It asked where the money came from for so costly a campaign, and finally it pointed out that the Irish bishops kept an ill-omened silence, and had not yet approved Mr. Redmond's statements—prophetic remarks, whose deplorable accuracy the history of the following months will reveal. Great Britain has suffered much from the errors, ambiguous associations, tergiversations, and weaknesses of those who governed her in 1914. Had not Mr. Asquith confided the censorship of the press to Sir Stanley Buckmaster, since become Lord Buckmaster, and one of the leading lights of the pacifist-defeatist cabal ?

There was of course a certain amount of variation, a few fine movements along the right road, and some of the Nationalist leaders made praiseworthy efforts to spur on recruiting. But a slight comparison seems to me to summarise very well the attitude of the two great divisions of Ireland : by the middle of November the municipality of Dublin had sent 42 of their employees to the army, Belfast 439.

About this time seditious tendencies became more defined. It was no longer a question of sly abstention, but of open sympathy for the enemy. The poisonous press, led by *The Irish Volunteer*,

that brilliant organ of the National Volunteers, preached Germany's innocence, rejoiced impudently over our reverses, calumniated in a hateful manner French, English, and Algerian troops, and promised that Albion's collapse would shortly supervene. *Irish Freedom* wrote that when that putrid old carcass could no longer move, a pæan of exultation would rise from the Irish nation which would rend the skies. *The Irish Volunteer* wrote :

"Do not, you Irishmen, fight for dirty little England," and "our only path to the glorious happy Ireland of our aspirations lies through the downfall of the British Empire."¹

Dear creatures ! It looks hopeful. But none of this disturbs Buckmaster nor Birrell nor the Viceroy Lord Aberdeen. What in the name of fortune would upset their equanimity ? Mr. Birrell, in reply to a question in the House, even asserted that—

"These publications appear to have an unusually large free circulation, particularly in England. . . . Although I do not myself regard them as a danger, I am sure they are an insult to the sentiment of the vast majority of the Irish people."²

About this time too a society, which has since been very prominent, took over the direction of

* ¹ House of Commons, November 25th, 1914.

² *Ibid.*

all this seditious agitation, the Sinn Fein Society. "Sinn Fein" in Gaelic means "we ourselves"; in a word, it is the party which wants integral autonomy, and it has a very realistic and very practical programme. Above all, Sinn Fein professes great contempt for the Irish Nationalist party and its Parliamentary efforts; it simply wants to ignore the British Parliament, asserting that neither Mr. Redmond nor his eighty-four deputies, nor even the great leaders of the past, have ever achieved anything. It has a Constitution:

"First: That we are a distinct nation.

"Second: That we will not make any voluntary agreement with Great Britain, until Great Britain keeps her own compact which she made by the Renunciation Act of 1783 which enacted 'that the right claimed by the people of Ireland to be bound only by laws enacted by His Majesty and the Parliament of that Kingdom is hereby declared to be established, and ascertained for ever, and shall, at no time hereafter, be questioned or questionable.'

"Third: That we are determined to make use of any powers we have, or may have at any time in the future, to work for our own advancement and for the creation of the prosperous, virile, and independent nation."

Then follow the methods which are to be employed:

The introduction of a Protective System for

Irish Industry and Commerce (against England, of course).

An Irish Consular Service.

An Irish Mercantile Marine, so as to dispense with the English.

The General Survey of Ireland and development of its mineral resources.

An Irish National Bank and a National Stock Exchange.

The creation of a National Civil Service; officials are to be appointed by the institution of a common national qualifying examination and a local competitive examination, the latter *at the discretion of the local bodies*. Compulsory teaching of the Irish language, of Irish history; “national” (!) methods of manufacture and agriculture—and other specimens of progress backwards.

The non-consumption of articles paying duty to the British Exchequer. Withdrawal of all voluntary support to the British Armed Forces.

The non-recognition of the British Parliaments as invested with constitutional or moral authority to legislate for Ireland. The Annual Assembly in Dublin of persons elected . . . to formulate measures for the benefit of the whole people of Ireland.

It is ambitious. The society started in a humble way at the time when the Nationalist party was at its zenith, that party whose hegemony it was one day to undermine.

Its founder is Mr. Griffith, a journalist of

Welsh extraction, and the principal directors are college and university professors, young poets, etc.

At first they were laughed at and treated as "intellectuals," but it must be confessed that their programme is practical rather than Utopian. "Stop begging for everything from England, let us get to work ourselves." They began by opening a bank, starting a newspaper, and asking for the suffrages of municipal and provincial voters.

They dissociated themselves from the two elements which had led the country till now, the clergy and the Nationalist party. "A century of fine speeches has given us nothing." Evidently the fine talkers, politicians by profession, had no love for them and returned their insults with interest. The clergy, more prudent, did not commit themselves, but waited to see which would win the day ; but the young priests did not conceal their sympathy with these out-and-out rebels, and were present at Sinn Fein meetings ; it often happened that in a parish the old priest was a Redmondite and his curates enthusiastic Sinn Feiners. Lastly—Sinn Fein has another ally, the group of revolutionary Socialists in Dublin, led by one of the most violent of demagogues, Jim Larkin, and delighted to find this help for the coming great social upheaval.

What is the conspicuous feature in this movement ? For the last century since O'Connell's day,

the official spokesman of Ireland, the elected representatives and the Roman Catholic priesthood, have demanded under the name of Home Rule an autonomy subject to the supremacy of the Crown, promising to behave nicely and to ask for nothing more, to be reasonable and maintain the same mutual advantages between the two islands, and finally never to constitute a military danger for England. As a guarantee of good faith it was always understood that the Imperial authorities alone would keep control over military matters and international relations. And at the very moment when all this was granted, when, as Mr. Redmond solemnly asserted, her right to autonomy had been conceded by the democracy of Great Britain, and therefore Ireland would feel in honour bound to keep her promises, a new party arose which replied to Mr. Redmond : " You had no right to make this promise ; we do not recognise any engagement made with England. We do not want either to have anything to do with your constitutional transaction, we must have an independent Republic."

Thereupon, in the course of two or three years, the whole of Ireland turned its back on Mr. Redmond, repudiated his declarations, and adopted the new formula of Sinn Fein. The game was up, and it might have been foreseen. Had not Parnell sworn to sever the last link ? The situation was reached by slow stages, but it was reached surely. Redmond's fine gestures and moving

phrases soothed the Radical idealists of England and made them oblivious of many other compromising threats. Unfortunately these were the only statements in Ireland which were worth anything. The Unionists were told to trust Ireland, and they shrugged their shoulders. Let us see if they were mistaken. In December 1914, as Mr. Birrell refused to intervene, the military authorities, tired of the official inertia, took upon themselves to seize these little seditious papers. And so the trouble began. Sinn Fein complained of persecution, held some stormy meetings and defied the police openly. Its success exceeded all its hopes ; the National Volunteers deserted Redmond and turned over wholesale to the Irish Volunteers of Sinn Fein.

Sinn Fein began to talk of "our brave allies the Germans," and adopted a new motto, "Gott strafe England!" Obviously Irish activity was drawing closer and closer to Berlin. On December 6th the German Dr. Kuno Meyer, formerly professor of the Celtic language at Dublin University, announced to the Clan-na-Gael in New York that Germany was engaged in forming an Irish Brigade from among her prisoners. That was the first confession of this fresh intrigue.

There are only two things to note of the first months of 1915 : the great prosperity of Ireland—for though dissociating herself from the war she did not refuse to profit by it—and the indifference of English public opinion to what was going on

in the Emerald Isle. Ireland was not provoked in any way—in fact no notice was taken of her, for England had other fish to fry. Some other pretext must be invented to excuse the attitude of treacherous Erin.

On March 15th Mr. Redmond complained at Manchester that his Volunteers had not been allowed to defend Irish soil by themselves. It was a fairly obvious hint to withdraw the English garrison. Ulster had made fewer reservations, and Belfast by March 1st had provided 19,000 men—that is, almost 5,000 for every 100,000 inhabitants, more than any other town in the United Kingdom; the Unionist counties of Ulster represent 30 per cent. of the population of Ireland, but they provided 60 per cent. of its recruits.

During the month of May, Dublin, headed by the Lord Mayor and its Nationalist members, began to agitate on the subject of the new duties on beer and spirits, for they would not even help us financially. Thereupon Mr. Redmond produced his ultimatum, supported by the vociferations of his whole party; and Asquith's Cabinet, unable to refuse him anything, yielded at the first demand and withdrew its scheme. The lesson was not lost; and the little scene was repeated every time that any help was asked from Ireland.

A few days later England went through the first serious crisis in internal politics since the declaration of war. The slowing down of voluntary recruiting, the insufficiency of munitions, the

military disappointments of Neuve Chapelle and Gallipoli, bickerings at the Admiralty, reverses in Galicia, an intrigue against Lord Kitchener, who was thought to be opposed to conscription—in short, there was a quantity of dirty linen to be washed, and Lord Northcliffe's press took charge of it with its accustomed vigour. It was a question of getting rid of the little petty back-stairs intrigues dear to the heart of the Radicals, of putting an end to Mr. Asquith's delays, of removing from office various lukewarm if not suspect personages, of insisting upon new blood, administrative reorganisation, and perfect unity of all the party leaders for the conduct of the war. This produced the Coalition Government, when Mr. Asquith took unto himself the great Conservative supporters, Lord Curzon, Mr. Balfour, Mr. Bonar Law, Mr. Walter Long, Mr. Austen Chamberlain, and the Trade Unionist leader Mr. Henderson.

In order to complete this union of willing spirits, it was only necessary to summon the leaders of the two rival factions in Ireland, Redmond and Carson. The latter gladly accepted one of the junior legal appointments, but Mr. Redmond declined the offer and preferred to remain outside as a free lance. It is said that he only refused because he was forced to do so, to obey his party ; at all events his refusal marked a change and withdrawal from his fine promises of August 1914.

To tell the truth, the Nationalist party were much dismayed to see the disappearance of the Home

Rule Cabinet which they had held in bondage for so long, and they did not conceal their annoyance. The rest seemed a secondary matter. The rest ! Civilisation with its back to the wall, the uncertain fate of other little nations, unpunished crimes, martyrs to avenge—no, Ireland, did not trouble about them. Can Nationalism only be racial egoism ?

Do you know what Dublin got excited about, a fortnight after the infernal affair of the *Lusitania* ? In the reconstruction of his Cabinet Mr. Asquith wished to appoint as Lord Chancellor of Ireland a former political opponent, a capable and respected lawyer, but a convinced Unionist. Instantly the Nationalists held a great Council of War and Mr. Redmond hurled his thunderbolts : “ It is an insult to Ireland ! ” Mr. Campbell withdrew his candidature in order to appease these sensitive patriots ; but what must Ulster think about the matter—she to whom has been promised later on under Home Rule the most absolute impartiality in nominations ?

In July there came another “ insult to Ireland.” Great Britain, having enrolled 3,000,000 men, saw that the flow of voluntary enlistment was practically exhausted, and prepared for conscription. For this purpose the population had to be registered and classified into the different categories from which fit men should be drawn. Ireland protested, and as the new Cabinet still contained Messrs. Asquith and Birrell, Mr. Redmond ordered

them to resort to the traditional expedient. Registration shall not apply to Ireland—only to Ulster.

But still promises were not fulfilled, recruiting in Ireland was slack and far below the normal average. Fresh pretexts had to be found to excuse this. There was much indignation at Sir Edward Carson's appointment; it was insinuated that the Ulster division was not being sent to the front, but was being retained in its camps with sinister motives, etc. It was even maintained that the mere presence of Carson in the Government was enough to absolve recalcitrant young Irishmen.

The apathy of these able-bodied young men was, it is true, merely superficial. On August 1st this fact was suddenly revealed, and there were many who thought it ominous. On that day O'Donovan Rossa was buried in Dublin; he was an old dynamiter of great age, of many crimes; he had been pardoned by Gladstone and exiled to America; in a word, he was a perfect type of an "Irish martyr." The funeral was magnificent, and 10,000 Volunteers, both Redmondites and Sinn Feiners, marched in the procession in good order. At least 5,000 of them were armed with rifles. Under the Birrell regime the police were always forbidden to interfere, and the recruiting sergeants could only look on with envious eyes. And Mr. Redmond was naïvely more and more amazed that the War Office refused to recognise his Volunteers officially!

At the end of October, Sir Edward Carson resigned, as he would not be responsible for the pusillanimous diplomacy in the Balkans. His opponents had then one excuse the less for neglecting their duty, but recruiting did not improve for all that. Mr. Redmond tried to comfort himself by pointing out the heroism of those Irish who were serving, and of those who came from Australia and Canada. We certainly admire them all, but what had they to do with the matter ? I will just quote in passing a statement on the same theme by an Irishman who, however, has no ill-feeling. "The country was not with it [*i.e.* the rebellion], for be it remembered that a whole army of Irishmen, possibly 300,000 of our race [he includes colonials], are fighting with England instead of against her"; and a little farther on : "It was hard enough that our men in the English armies should be slain for causes which no amount of explanation will ever render less foreign to us, or even intelligible" (*sic !*).¹

The commentary spoils it all. Redmond made out that he was very proud of the attitude of his fellow-countrymen. He assured Parliament on November 2nd that for the first time in the course of history the whole Irish race fully sympathised with England in the war. It is true that Ireland was quiet, or appeared to be quiet. The following months will show us what that conceals.

In December 1915 *The Times* raised another alarm about Sinn Fein propaganda, and about

¹ *The Insurrection in Dublin*, by James Stephens, pp. 87, 88.

small leaflets, so called, which had a considerable circulation. Mr. Birrell was obliged to confess that the Irish Volunteers tried to prevent recruiting and to foment sedition. Unfortunately he still did not decide to take any steps, and his panacea was as usual a policy of *laissez-faire*. The malcontents armed themselves and drilled with more enthusiasm than ever; the Bishop of Limerick blessed their cause and wrote that "this war does not concern Ireland." All agreed upon a fresh argument. "We do not owe England anything so long as she does not put into force the Home Rule Act which she has passed. Mr. Redmond betrayed us when he accepted this postponement, when he neglected to make use of circumstances to force Mr. Asquith's hand and oblige him to give immediate and complete satisfaction, *including the submission of Ulster*. The English are in difficulties; the war is giving them more trouble than was expected. So much the better. 'England's difficulty, Ireland's opportunity.' Let us make the most of it." Just at this time the Government wished to retrench and reduce administrative expenditure. A commission was suggested to examine notorious abuses of Irish administration. Mr. Redmond opposed it: "no Irish economies." The Government gave in. Yet for forty years the Nationalist party has been objecting to that very wastefulness and extravagance in the Irish estimates! How logical! How consistent!

In the New Year of 1916 the British Cabinet came to the stern decision to bring in conscription. The idea was repugnant to Liberal Englishmen, but when people are willing they can stifle their objections at so tragic a crisis and in so noble a cause. The debate was a solemn one and the Bill was passed by a majority of ten to one.¹ Here again Mr. Redmond opposed his veto: the new Act was not to extend to Ireland. Heaven knows what worries that clause has caused !

The speech of the Irish leader was feeble. His main object was to assert that his country had done her duty; is his assertion enough to make us believe it? He even dared to risk a comparison between Great Britain and Ireland. Is it not a challenge? To do it justice we produce the exact figures which the Government had to publish at the time.

Great Britain had up to October 23rd, 1915, produced nearly 3,000,000 volunteers (in the regular army, the reserve, the navy, and Kitchener's army).² She still had 5,000,000 men of military age of whom 2,830,000 came forward under Lord Derby's scheme between October 23rd and December 15th—on the condition that they would be called up in groups, unmarried men first, etc.

At the instance of Mr. Redmond, Lord Derby's scheme of enrolling men under categories had also

¹ 403 votes against 105, of which 60 were Nationalists.

² Before the war the regular army and the navy contained 26,000 Irishmen serving and 30,000 in the reserve.

not been applied to Ireland. Mr. Birrell drew up the following table for the four Irish provinces : (1) men of military age on August 15th, 1915 ; (2) voluntary enlistments up to December 15th.

	(1)	(2)
Leinster (Dublin)	174,597	27,458 or 15·7 per cent.
Munster	136,637	14,190 , , 10·4 , ,
Connaught	81,392	3,589 , , 4·4 , ,
Ulster	169,489	49,760 , , 29·5 , ,

The reader can see whether the percentages justify Mr. Redmond's patriotic pride so far as the first three provinces are concerned, which belong to his party. Mr. Campbell, member for Dublin University, in one of the finest speeches in the debate, said :

“ I would not be honest—and in this matter one is bound to speak plainly and frankly—if I were to live up, or attempt to live up, to that conspiracy of make-believe in regard to recruiting in Ireland which prevails to-day. . . . There are many parts of Ireland to-day in which you could not hold a recruiting meeting. There have been, to my own knowledge, in the last few months many of those recruiting meetings broken up, hostile resolutions carried, and even that great soldier Lieutenant O’Leary, who gained the Victoria Cross as the result of conspicuous gallantry, has to my own knowledge been received with jeers and hoots.”¹

Mr. Campbell, in a fine passage, takes up and

¹ House of Commons, January 6th, 1916.

turns round the hateful formula, "England's difficulty, Ireland's opportunity," in an ardent appeal ; yes, now is come the chance for Ireland, the opportune moment, the hour for exalted inspiration ; yes, let us be loyal to the cause of justice and liberty, let us help England in her noble task. Then, indeed, we shall have deserved everything and we shall be able to ask for everything. We shall have won our rights otherwise than by rebellions and stabs in the back . . . ! Alas ! as Mr. Campbell is an old Unionist, the Nationalists listened to all this with amusement, and a voice whispers to them the new creed—the motto of Sinn Fein—"Ourselves alone."

Sir Edward Carson protested in the name of Ulster ; his province was humiliated by this insulting favour, and valiant Irish regiments will be short of recruits. Mr. Redmond was angry ; he undertook that the Irish regiments would not be thus neglected, there would be no lack of volunteers. A fine promise certainly, but who would keep it ? Was it not flouted a year ago ? No, Ireland will not have conscription, and the hour is approaching when she will thank us after her manner.

Imperceptibly we draw near to the edge of the abyss. The rebels prepared their plot under better conditions than they could have expected ; everything looked most promising for their schemes. No one is thinking about them, all eyes are turned

elsewhere ; the tragic anxiety of Verdun engrosses everyone, and since midnight on March 1st there is unrestricted submarine war. Poor Ireland ! another insult, the mortification of interesting nobody ! Even those who ought to be thinking about her, such as Mr. Birrell, do not appear to be doing so. The Sinn Feiners have a clear field ; they are no longer content with field days in the country, they have manoeuvres in Dublin itself. Night manoeuvres, street fighting, sham sieges of the Castle, the citadel of the Government ; and all this is done with modern rifles, with impunity, under the eyes of a muzzled police. Mr. Birrell and his subordinates make out that this is very amusing and quite harmless. The reign of these nonchalant gentlemen is drawing to its close, and soon we shall have no need to refer to them, but before forgetting them I will just recall one of the hundreds of little incidents which are typical of the methods of these ineffable administrators.

The Budget of 1916 instituted a tax upon public entertainments, sports meetings, etc. In Ireland, where everything is politics, sports are regulated by the Gaelic League, a sort of replica of Sinn Fein. Football and hockey with new names and trifling alterations have been turned by the Gaelic League into "national games for developing the national spirit." It simply means that they object to one of the forms of Anglo-Saxon influence, and no effort is made to conceal it. Moreover, the rules of the League exclude rigorously any Irish-

man "so cowardly as to wear the English uniform," and no soldier can enter its precincts.

Moreover, this League demanded that it should pay no entertainment tax on gate-money for its football matches, on the plea of the higher interests of national idealism and other fool-traps. Mr. Birrell was the fool: he gave way with his usual suavity. Sedition was at a premium, and this happened a fortnight before civil war in Dublin!

Finally, the Courts were useless. As soon as a judge dared to show severity, he was reprimanded by Government. The juries were the accomplices in all misdemeanours: for a speech inciting to treason the fine was one shilling, and the Kaiser was applauded from the Bench itself. No steps were taken, the police had to keep quiet.

The forts of Verdun fall one by one, we are being driven into a corner, the savage brute has us at bay . . . we have only to be shot from behind: Sinn Fein undertakes the job.

On April 25th, 1916, Easter Tuesday, the Admiralty published a brief communiqué:

"During the period between p.m. April 20th and p.m. April 21st, an attempt to land arms¹ and ammunition in Ireland was made by a vessel under the guise of a neutral merchant ship, but in reality a German auxiliary, in conjunction with a German submarine. The auxiliary sank and a number of prisoners were made, amongst them was Sir Roger Casement."

¹ 20,000 rifles captured in Russia.

That same evening there were other surprises : the German cruisers come out, the east coast of England is bombarded, an armed rebellion in Dublin, the General Post Office seized by rioters, etc. . . . We can all remember these events as they were described in the newspapers. The coincidences were conclusive : the German has been at work, and the Irish too. Ireland has given herself away. And Mr. Birrell will have to allow, before he goes into retirement, after ten years of culpable weakness, that Ireland cannot be won by kindness. May other statesmen, no less sincere and well-meaning, not fall again into his mistake !

CHAPTER VIII

THE INSURRECTION AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

THUS, during Easter 1916, the authorities charged with the duty of governing Ireland laid aside all anxiety and suspicion ; optimism was the order of the day. The officers at the Curragh were allowed to be present on the following day at the steeple-chases at Fairyhouse, and General Friend, the Commander-in-Chief, went to London on leave. Dublin Castle was guarded by seventeen men. There were no more than 1,000 men in Dublin to hold all the barracks, magazines, etc., and 2,500 at the Curragh.

Farther off, in the west, rumour was busy, secrets were whispered from one to another mysteriously. "The Germans have come to deliver Ireland . . . 30,000 Prussians have landed in Kerry, the same number of Irish-Americans at Wexford . . . Verdun has fallen. France has capitulated and signed the peace, England is imploring for a separate peace . . . the Irish coasts are surrounded by a cordon of submarines, English reinforcements will not be able to land . . ."

Easter Monday was a regular fête day with glorious sunshine. A grand parade of Sinn Fein

Volunteers, in green uniforms, had been announced. In the streets of Dublin there were many soldiers on leave, among them Canadians and Australians who had come to see their distant cousins. British troops carry no arms when not on duty, not even a bayonet.

Little squads of Sinn Feiners were all about, on their way to the parade ; they were looked at with curiosity, but the sight was nothing new. All of a sudden a young English officer who had just bought a stamp at the General Post Office was told that he was a prisoner, turned round and found himself between two Volunteers with fixed bayonets. Outside, shots were heard ; Sinn Fein was shooting down all the unarmed men on leave—a vestige of that atavistic ferocity which Ulster is so greatly blamed for mistrusting. A fortnight later, Mr. Dillon, speaking in the House of Commons, said that he regretted to see the ardour of his fellow-countrymen so misplaced, but he was proud of their courage, and they fought cleanly. The Irish have these euphemisms ! Some cavalry were returning from escort duty under a second lieutenant, their lances at rest, and without other arms, and went slowly along by the quays. When the officer, quite a young boy, turned the corner into Sackville Street, several shots rang out ; he fell from his horse, killed, then the sergeant.

At the gates of the Castle an old policeman was on duty, a good old fellow, popular and well known in Dublin. Seeing a patrol arrive and thinking it

was some new joke, such as he had seen so many of in the last two years, he raised his hand and said : "Now then, boys, be off with you, no nonsense." He was shot down and killed. The patrol was led by a woman who bent down and spat in the face of the corpse. It took two seconds, just time for the sentries to summon the guard. It was thus that Dublin Castle was saved.

Motor-cars, lorries, etc., were stopped and requisitioned for barricades. All civilians who did not obey (for as yet no one took all this seriously) were answered by a revolver bullet without more ado. Saint Stephen's Green was seized by another party, commanded by the famous Countess Markievicz, elegantly attired in a green tunic, breeches, and soft felt hat. A daughter of one of the best and oldest families in the country, the Gore-Booths, æsthetic, eccentric, formerly mixed up with young art students in Montparnasse, she had married in Paris a young Polish count, and had brought him back to Dublin, where she was at the head of the suffragettes, socialist kitchens, futurist art and decadent theatre, etc. An admirer attributes this pious wish to the picturesque Amazon : "If I could only shoot one British soldier I should die happy !" Was the wish fulfilled ? . . . Some officers coming out from lunch at the Shelbourne Hotel on the other side of the square fell to the ground—they were just casual visitors, and unarmed. Finally the rebels installed themselves in several large buildings, made loopholes in them and sniped the

last passers-by in khaki who dared to come within their range.

This began at midday on the Monday. The regular troops from the Curragh did not arrive till that evening, and reinforcements from England not till the Wednesday. In the meantime only defenceless pedestrians were killed, quite an orgy of the "bravery" so dear to Mr. Dillon. Sinn Fein hoisted its white, green, and orange flag on the Post Office and proclaimed the Irish Republic.

"Irishmen and Irishwomen : In the name of God and of the dead generations from which she receives her old traditions of nationhood, Ireland, through us, summons her children to her flag. . . . Having resolutely waited for the right moment to reveal itself, she now seizes that moment, and supported by her exiled children in America and by *gallant allies in Europe*. . . ."

During this time, while the armed Sinn Feiners showed a certain amount of discipline, the dregs of the Dublin slums pillaged the big shops in the two main streets, Sackville Street and Grafton Street, furriers, jewellers, sweet-shops, etc. The next day white fox-fur muffs were changing hands for one or two shillings in the poor parts of the city. The men mostly chose to attack the wine and spirit dealers ; drunk and enraged they felled one another with the bottles, and by the evening the Dublin hospitals had many more wounded from that cause than by rifle fire.

By nightfall Sinn Fein head-quarters declared that they were delighted, and the fact remains that they had shown some tactical skill and a well-concerted plan. The buildings in their hands dominated the bridges and main roads, etc. They had begun the work, and as for the rest, they announced to the people that the Germans would complete it. Instead of Germans, the steamers from England brought regiments of Kitchener's army, with artillery, machine-guns, armoured cars ; the men of the Irish battalions were not behind-hand in their determination to make the rebels see reason.

On the Wednesday martial law was proclaimed, and General Maxwell arrived charged with the duty of re-establishing order. The General had just come from defending the Suez Canal and repulsing the Turks, and happened to be in England in order to take up a more important command ; in Egypt he had shown himself to be a skilful administrator as well as a successful soldier.

Little by little the rebels were surrounded, but they still held out for a few days. On Friday, although they knew that all was lost, their head-quarters issued a final piece of bravado : "The English Army, so proud of the Dardanelles and the Marne, has been conquered by us !" Then the glorious War of Liberation came to an end with the close of the week, and the whole party surrendered on Saturday. The sum total of the adventure was 124 soldiers killed, 400 wounded, 216 civilians

killed, 514 wounded. The finest streets in Dublin were destroyed and the damage amounted to £4,000,000. The losses of the Sinn Feiners could never be estimated; many were buried and burned under the ruins of the houses which had been fired, and most of the wounded were carried away and hidden by their friends. The majority of the rebels had only to discard a rifle and bandolier to pose as inoffensive spectators; and if there were instances of summary justice, it was due to the fact that in this case verily "the civilians had fired." Finally, all the witnesses, journalists, officers, and magistrates who saw the captured cases of ammunition, and the cartridge belts left upon the field, agree that Germany had supplied her Irish minions with explosive bullets. That would surprise nobody. To-day the Irish will only remember the corpses of so-called civilians, with the usual resounding anathemas from their melodramatic repertoire.

Had the leaders of the movement ever reckoned sincerely on success? It is hard to believe it. Their true motives may be found in two points. It had been agreed in writing between Casement and the Wilhelmstrasse that if the rebels could hold the capital for one week during the Verdun offensive, Ireland would be represented at the peace negotiations as an independent and sovereign nation. Sinn Fein kept its part of the compact; it is for us to see that it gets no reward for having betrayed us.

The other calculation was better founded and

could not fail to succeed. “Our insurrection will be put down, but the moral effect will be immense. It will be followed by repression, and that will be our victory ; Ireland the Martyr will be grander than ever.”

Sinn Fein left at the mercy of Sir John Maxwell about a thousand rebels taken with arms in their hands, the only ones at least who were wearing the green uniform and could not get through the surrounding cordon. Then, according to the ancient formula, Ireland’s martyrdom began. The prisoners were taken before courts martial. “Bloody courts,” howled the Irish. Good heavens ! they are not set up to award good-conduct prizes. All the signatories of the proclamation were shot. Altogether there were fifteen executions ; sixty-nine others who were condemned to death, including Countess Markievicz, were reprieved by General Maxwell, who had plenary powers of life and death. The Irish called this a butchery. The rest of the prisoners were deported to concentration camps in England.

The moral effect on which Sinn Fein had counted soon made itself felt. A week after the capitulation General Maxwell passed into Irish legend under the name of “sinister brute,” and other more or less Homeric epithets. “The soldiery drowned Ireland in blood” . . . it is true that Mr. Birrell would have set about it less severely. One heard of nothing but touching episodes : the daring of Countess Markievicz, kissing her revolver before

handing it over to the English officer; or young Plunket, a poet aged twenty, marrying his fiancée in his cell at midnight before going to his execution. A frightful fuss was made about some doubtful incidents, about three bodies of "civilians" found hidden in a cellar, no doubt massacred by bloodthirsty Tommies; or the death of Mr. Sheehy Skeffington, shot without trial. It was proved on the one hand that Mr. Skeffington, one of the promoters of anti-English propaganda, had never taken up arms during the rebellion, and on the other hand that his executioner was a convalescent officer, not recovered from shell-shock which he had contracted in Flanders. Skeffington's widow, raised to the rank of national heroine, now travels about the United States, crying aloud for vengeance and presiding at Irish meetings against recruiting.¹ Thus the two methods succeed one another without respite; first explosive bullets, then pathos and sentiment. Everything else is quickly forgotten! A year later Bishop Fogarty, in Limerick Cathedral, bowed at the name of the "brave and heroic Irishmen shot in Dublin, with unmerciful brutality." There are now only noble victims of Saxon barbarity. Oh, if the Sinn Feiners had had to deal with their "gallant allies"! If they could have enjoyed the "preventive" mildness of Aerschot or of Dinant!

¹ She afterwards returned to Liverpool, and assisted in another agitation because the English authorities would not allow her to return to Ireland.

History repeats itself in its contradictions as in its analogies. The man who prescribed for ten years to the English Government the infallible remedy “trust poor Ireland” did not fear to turn accuser; John Redmond asked the Prime Minister on May 8th, 1916 :

“ whether he was aware that the continuance of military executions in Ireland had caused rapidly increasing bitterness and exasperation among large sections of the population who had no sympathy with the rising, and whether it might not be better to follow the precedent set up by General Botha in South Africa, where only one had been executed and the rest exceedingly leniently treated, and stop the executions forthwith ? ”

All the Irish members joined in the chorus. Mr. Asquith found himself treated as an assassin. Poor Mr. Asquith ! to have coquetted with those rebels for so long and come to that at last !

Mr. Birrell and Lord Wimborne, the Viceroy, resigned of course, bewailing themselves and pleading that they had acted for the best. The Radical party were much mortified, for they had had too many warnings to be excused; but all those who were responsible, Irish and English Liberals, were quickly agreed upon the reply to make : “ All that is Carson’s fault ! ” A grand idea ! Carson, who for two years had not said a word, who had not uttered one complaint or provocation, and had preached in Ireland nothing but peace; Carson,

whose one thought was for the great war, and who was entirely devoted to the great Crusade !

Mr. Redmond and his friends have on many occasions declared that the “ Irish people ” were not implicated, and had shown no sympathy for the rebellion. We must understand one another. The armed rebels, it is true, only amounted to a few thousands. But if the rest of the nation was willing to insult and curse England, can one say that it was not their accomplice ? I believe that Mr. Birrell’s evidence before the Commission of Inquiry is conclusive, for no one can accuse the former Chief Secretary of prejudice against Ireland.

“ You had a certain number of prosecutions for anti-recruiting and seditious meetings, but you could not get convictions with a jury ?—No. It was not merely that the jury disagreed, but they acquitted ?—They acquitted, yes . . . when it was a case against a schoolmaster for having explosives and ammunition in his bag and seditious literature and all that—we could not get a conviction. That was before a jury. ”¹

This was confirmed by all the witnesses at the inquiry. Before this same commission, Major Price, one of the heads of the police, gave evidence in these words :

“ The one unfortunate thing which hindered us a good deal was the attitude of the official Nation-

¹ *Evidence before the Royal Commission on the Rebellion in Ireland* (Mr. Birrell), May 19th, 1916, p. 25.

alist party and their press. Whenever General Friend did anything strong in the way of suppressing or deporting the Sinn Fein leaders from Ireland, they at once deprecated it in the Nationalist press and said it was a monstrous thing to turn any man out of Ireland.”¹

It is the same old cry of all riotings and all rebellions : preventive measures are odious, repression and retaliation are criminal !

After the rebellion the Nationalist party, which had for the last two years been forced by its leader to adopt a dignified mien and a reserve to which it was unaccustomed, was delighted to return to its guerrilla warfare, and to be able to spit out all its accumulated venom. It set about it with joy, it monopolised the attention of Parliament, and questions and abuse increased more and more. Would the Government stop the arrests ? the requisitions ? restore civil supremacy ? see that troops were not marched along the high roads of Ireland ? treat prisoners properly ? treat them as prisoners of war according to international conventions ! etc., etc.

I have had to read over all this rubbish, and could find nothing in it but the most surprising pettiness and irrelevance. There is not one gleam of regeneration, no solid basis on which to rebuild the ruins—nothing but obstruction, hatred, rage, scorn.

¹ *Evidence before the Royal Commission on the Rebellion in Ireland* (Major Ivor H. Price), May 25th, 1916, p. 57.

Not one gleam? Well, yes, one; but it came from England. On May 25th Mr. Asquith and his Coalition Cabinet proposed to the Irish parties that they should resume the conferences which King George had summoned in July 1914, and try to find a *modus vivendi* between themselves. The idea was a good one; the quarrel is no longer—if it ever was—between Ireland and England, but between two enemy Irelands. They must begin by examining the situation, and by looking for possible points of contact. A connecting link was necessary, a president of the court, a critic or an impartial adviser; it should be Mr. Lloyd George, at that time Minister of Munitions. He is a Welsh Celt, his fervour and imagination ought to please the Irish, and he has no “Irish past”—he is not compromised by any prejudice on the question. There is strong hope that in this solemn hour, heavy with remorse and anguish, in the shame which must make Irish patriots blush, and after a bloody awakening from too wild dreams, everyone will feel inclined to be generous and accommodating over the transaction.

For some weeks people consoled themselves with this illusion. According to gossip from Parliamentary lobbies, Mr. Lloyd George was conferring with the protagonists; he seemed to be smiling and confident, the atmosphere was good and promised an understanding between all the rivals; at last the eternal Irish question was to be solved. Mirage!

There was still no official *communiqué* upon the result of the conferences, but soon rumours were crystallised : Sir Edward Carson was said to have renewed the proposal submitted in 1914 to the Conference at Buckingham Palace—that is to say, to take no further steps against Home Rule if the Protestant counties of Ulster were excluded—and Lloyd George was said to be negotiating on that basis.

That was enough to dispel the mirage. The Nationalists grew excited, and threatened : “ All or nothing : Ireland is indivisible ; you have no right to dismember her.” Redmond might perhaps have yielded, but he was carefully reminded that he had no longer any authority and that he represented nobody any more. The clergy declared themselves flatly hostile, the Bishops issued a proclamation against Lloyd George’s proposal. The Southern Unionists were not content either, for to grant Home Rule thus on the morrow of rebellion was not encouraging to law-abiding men. And Sinn Fein was already exulting openly and saying that its methods had thrown England into a panic and made Ministers bestir themselves. At once Redmond was much alarmed at having accepted the exclusion of the Ulster counties, and the only thing left for him to do was to try to back out, recriminate, quibble over temporary or final exclusion, get tied up in subtleties, trying to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds, promising at the same time to his partisans that

Ulster would have to "adhere automatically" to Home Rule Ireland after a certain time, and to Ulster that there would never be any question of constraining her by force.

In short, no agreement could be reached. Out of the whole of this sterile conference we need only recall two or three facts, and they will form a fairly accurate summary of the Irish question.

1. Mr. Asquith, the Prime Minister, and Mr. Devlin, the leader of the Roman Catholic Nationalists of Ulster, both expressly admitted the principle of the exclusion of Ulster.

2. The whole of the rest of Ireland was on the contrary violently opposed to it.

3. The desire to arrive at a compromise existed only in London. Several letters from Sir Horace Plunkett reminded the English that in Ireland no one either sought or desired compromise. And if Mr. Redmond made undertakings in the name of Ireland, all, people, press, and clergy, unanimously repudiated him beforehand; once again his is a voice crying in the wilderness.

4. The only man who in the whole of the debate spoke like a statesman and received congratulations from all sides, both friends and enemies, was again Sir Edward Carson, in the speech which is perhaps the noblest in the whole of his career:

"The Home Rule Act was put upon the Statute Book shortly after the war began, but there was accompanying it a statement by . . . the Prime

Minister . . . that they never contemplated the coercion of Ulster. . . . After that statement had been made so far as I am concerned . . . Ireland to a very large extent . . . had passed out of my political consideration altogether. I thought only of the war from that day forward. . . . The war swallows up everything. . . . Let there be no idea of the coercion of Ulster. Let it be completely struck out of the Bill, and then go on to win her if you can. . . . She can be won when good government is shown or administered in the rest of Ireland. . . . But what have you to look forward to when the war is over? . . . We will resume our old quarrels over how Ulster is to be excluded when we have just come to terms as to how she should be dealt with. I look forward to it with horror. There is one thing: At the end of the war we will have had enough of fighting.”¹

But as the whole of Nationalist Ireland is of a different opinion, Lloyd George and his negotiators received nothing but groans and boos, and England got a little more abuse.

And Ireland returned to her routine of sulkiness, pin-pricks, and outbursts of fury. A new Chief Secretary was appointed, Mr. Duke, one of the most well-meaning men in the world, who felt sure that he would soon have splendid results by his gentleness and tact. Could he forget so speedily the avatars of his predecessor?

Ireland was again plunged in obscurity, for the other conflict continued, far more terrible, and

¹ House of Commons, July 24th, 1916.

during all that time there were many more urgent matters to think about than the Irish imbroglio—the battles of the Somme and of Jutland, Brussiloff's offensive, the martyrdom (genuine in this case) of Miss Cavell and Captain Fryatt and of all our tortured prisoners.

Those who visited Ireland in the autumn of 1916 were surprised to note a change of which the London newspapers had spoken little; that was the fact that Sinn Fein was winning sympathy on all sides, and that its propaganda had made striking progress. Its flag flew everywhere, its rosette was in every button-hole, its publications were all over the place, and its songs were heard at every meeting, both in the towns and in the villages. The portraits of the Easter Monday rebels were in the shop windows, and working-men raised their hats as they passed. The deed was done, the scheme of the rebels had materialised, the rebellion had brought the "moral victory" on which they had reckoned; this is quite consonant with all the past history of the distressful isle.

A Nationalist member, one of the party which was by way of disapproving of Sinn Fein, stated openly in an address that during Easter week they had witnessed abominable executions: the brutal murder of the best men whom Ireland had ever produced (*sic*).¹

The English Government was even blamed for having allowed Casement to be executed! A

¹ Kilkenny, October 14th, 1916.

petition asking for his reprieve had been signed by Cardinal Logue and several Catholic prelates. Moreover, in a long speech in the House of Commons on October 18th, 1916, Mr. Redmond himself took up the thread of the national legend which had hardly been interrupted. For the last two years he could see nothing but English stupidity ; he forgot that nothing had been done without his advice or his orders. According to him, if the Irish regiments were short of men it was the fault of the blind and obstinate War Office which would not follow his recommendations, adopt such-and-such a flag, such-and-such emblems, grant commissions to his good inoffensive Nationalists, keep up the troops in barracks or let regiments parade at the places, days, and hours which Mr. Redmond wished, etc. . . . in a word, would not give in to the whims of those fine fellows whom they did wrong to mistrust. The rebellion ? pshaw !—a small matter when all was said and done ; was it not almost justified by the horrors of its suppression ? You will often find these *a posteriori* arguments in Irish polemic. This is how the history of this martyred race is written ; one could laugh at it if one did not know that in twenty years' time earnest men will take these fables, so solemnly stated, as true facts.

By thus demanding persistently mercy for traitors and indulgence for rebels, Mr. Redmond and his satellites did not seem to realise that they were compromising themselves. They would soon

have to realise it : contrary to their expectations it was not they who were to recover their lost prestige, it was the rebels whose audacity increased and whose halo shone still more brightly, for their influence increased in an amazing way in 1917.

Mr. Lloyd George having replaced Mr. Asquith as head of the Cabinet, the Nationalist leader saw fit to ask him another question : "Would the Government without further delay confer upon Ireland the free institutions long promised to her ? "

That is frank enough ! at last we know what they are aiming at. Mr. Redmond, in order to allay anxiety, had allowed Mr. Asquith to suspend the application of so keenly disputed a measure until after the war ; moreover, he had promised Ulster divers delays in order to bring her in of her own free will ; had guaranteed ample safeguards, etc. All that no longer counted ; since the sick man had declined an anaesthetic, he was to be bound and cut up alive. Irish "independence" has made a decidedly bad beginning.

The Prime Minister's reply was clear, and let us hope final :

" There are two questions to be asked by all of us. The first is this. Are the people of this country prepared to confer self-government on the parts of Ireland which unmistakably demand it ? The answer which I give on behalf of the Cabinet is that the Government are firmly of that opinion, and they are firmly of the opinion that that re-

presents the views of the vast majority of the people of this country. The next point is this. Are the people of this country prepared to force the population of the north-eastern corner of Ireland to submit to be governed by a population with whom they are completely out of sympathy ? In my judgment, and here I speak on behalf of the Government, there is but one answer to that. They are not.”¹

Mr. Redmond rose from his seat, followed by the whole of his party, and left the House and banged the doors. The following day he cabled a proclamation to the President of the United States and to the Premiers of the colonial Governments, accusing the British Government of treason and disloyalty. In Ireland itself there was a great to-do, a chorus of protests, a fresh manifesto from the Bishops against the “partition of the nation.” *The Times* asked for the views of eminent Americans, statesmen, professors, cardinals, Roosevelt, Taft, Monsignor Gibbons, Monsignor Ireland : all were opposed to partition and decided light-heartedly that Ulster had only to yield. It was easily said. Sinn Fein continued to gain ground, carried off with a high hand all the vacant seats in the by-elections ; the official Nationalists who openly professed to espouse the cause of the Allies were left stranded.

In a word, the question relapsed into the deadlock from which it is still far from freeing itself. Home

• ¹ House of Commons, March 7th, 1917.

Rule is offered to Ireland—she will have none of it, insists on having Ulster on the pretext of national unity. The demand is folly : England really cannot be expected to use force to make Ulster separate from her. The only possible conclusion, one which foreign critics still do not seem to understand, is that England has not much to do with the matter. It is simply a quarrel between the Irish groups, and the two conflicting proposals are irreconcilable. Every solution conceived in London dissatisfies one or the other party ; it rests with them to come to an agreement.

There are precedents for this ; the most recent and best known is that of the South African constitution, drawn up on the spot by the interested parties ; let Ireland do likewise and submit her scheme. Till now she has never wished to take the initiative, and has been satisfied with criticising everything which Great Britain suggests to her. In that she has a characteristic in common with many oppressed nationalities—so-called ; her policy is in its essence negative, obstructionist and destructive.

Now Lloyd George is the antithesis of all this. Though a Celt himself—and Heaven knows he is proud enough of the fact—he belies Mommsen's celebrated dictum, he has the sense of "constructive" politics. Moreover, with the faults of his race and his dangerous impulsiveness, he also has its imagination and enthusiasm, everything which the Irish deny to the "despicable

Saxon." Seeing this unhappy nation going adrift once more, more distracted than ever, he repeats to her what the English have already said to her hundreds of times :

" My good friends," he says to them in effect, " your imprecations are very eloquent, your repertory of insults have a picturesqueness of their own, your tragic history, your painful past, your sentimental soul all combine to make you attract our sympathy. But all that is very barren ; could you not agree to give a little thought to other matters"—(interruptions and protest from outraged patriotism)—" to imitate the methods which have given elsewhere results of which you are jealous ; in a word, could you not complain less and work harder ?

" For see, the opportunity has arisen. You accuse us of all your misfortunes, you say that you are in bondage. Well, I will leave you masters of your destinies. I will call together the chosen spirits from among your people, a hundred of your most eminent men by reason of their rank, wisdom, and experience ; we will include all the responsible bodies in the State, lawyers, administrators, financiers, bishops, politicians, theoretical and practical economists—Irishmen all. But as your case is based upon the self-government of minorities of distinct nationality, we will give the latter a large share of representation, even those whom you dislike. I invite your fiercest extremists, those Sinn Feiners who have just attacked us with arms in their hands. They refuse ? I regret it ; they would have been welcome, we were so anxious to know their arguments.

" Apart from that this Senate can do as it pleases. I promise you not to interfere with it. It shall be absolute master of the choice of its methods of work, of the secrecy of its deliberations. I hope that it will bring to its work all the wisdom, all the dignity, conciliation, breadth of view, and foresight expected from such an august assembly. It will endeavour to draw up your Constitution, to organise that much-longed-for liberty which will at last allow you " (here the speaker smiles), " I am sure, to recover your former splendours," (here the speaker relapses into solemnity).

" And when it has accomplished this noble task, I promise you once more to ratify its decisions and to obtain the consent of my Parliament and my sovereign. On one condition, be it understood : these schemes must be adopted within the bosom of your commission by considerable majorities, thus representing concessions and compromises. If you persist in voting solidly by races, by religions, by factions, nothing can be done ; I will have none of these promises of civil war. And now, to work."

The whole House applauded and all the party leaders agreed to try the experiment. But—there is always a " but " to entangle matters in the history of Ireland !—murmurs were already heard ; the abstention of Sinn Fein, the most popular party, was significant, and pamphlets abused the English Ministers who wanted to evade their responsibilities.

Nevertheless there is no doubt that Lloyd George by this very simple and very lucid inspiration had just won a far more decisive victory than the Irish

believed ; a moral victory of which the result would be felt chiefly abroad, in Europe, and farther afield : it was his turn to put the plaintiffs in the dock and hand over to them the burden of proof.

The Convention sat in secret, and in order to avoid polemics and hostile criticisms the newspapers were forbidden to publish anything about the deliberations, except the official *communiqués*. At the opening meeting Sir Horace Plunkett was unanimously elected President, and all serious-minded men welcomed the choice of such a man.

In order that the Convention should start its work in an unimpeachable atmosphere, the Government thought it advisable to grant a general amnesty and to release the last rebels of 1916 who were interned in England. Their intention was certainly excellent, but as usual the result was disappointing ; at the very moment when the liberated prisoners were landing in Ireland very serious riots broke out in Cork ; the mob attacked the prison and the recruiting office, threw the flags of the Allies into the river and hoisted that of Sinn Fein. Everywhere the prisoners had a triumphant return ; the town of Kilkenny elected the Countess Markievicz to the freedom of the city.

The seat of Major Redmond, who had just been killed at Messines, was immediately won by an immense majority by the Sinn Feiner de Valera,¹

¹ De Valera is of South American origin. In all countries one often finds foreign protagonists or men of mixed descent at the head of nationalist movements.

who had been a section commander during the rebellion, had been condemned to death and reprieved. The incident was very mortifying for the Nationalists, who had already profited by William Redmond's noble end to pose as a lot of misunderstood heroes.

Young priests figured more and more frequently in Sinn Fein meetings and processions. On August 5th, the anniversary of Casement's execution was feted, and thousands of peasants made a pilgrimage to the shore at Ardfert where the traitor was captured.

Therefore everything was done from the English side to obtain the concurrence and goodwill of the Irish ; it is the Irish alone who refuse to give it, and as they repudiate beforehand in a hundred different ways the Nationalist leaders who claim to represent them at the Convention, what good can be expected to come of it ? Once again promises will be worthless. All that is of very bad omen.

For months on end we look on at a disconcerting contrast. On the one hand there is a Convention for settlement, which the initiated say is on a fair way to success, working in secret—all the members who are questioned on the subject between the meetings declare that everything is going well, all the symptoms are encouraging, and there is every hope that it will come to a satisfactory solution. On the other hand there is the nation which persists in agitations, compromising and damning itself at the very moment when efforts

are being made for its salvation. The Sinn Fein Volunteers now amount to 200,000 according to Mr. Duke,¹ to 500,000 according to de Valera, and the whole island was given over to a fresh access of terrorism as it was ten years previously ; policemen were assassinated, boycotting in the villages, and cattle driving, etc., were in full swing —in a word, all those amenities which the Irish peasants, who since the war started had been fully occupied coining money, had almost forgotten to indulge in.

Take this little incident. In November 1917 a humble village schoolmistress, Mrs. Ryan, was expelled by a party of Sinn Feiners. Her crime ? "For having played the Dead March in *Saul* on the school piano before her pupils on hearing of the death of Lord Kitchener," in 1916 ! That was definite enough. Sinn Feiners decreed that the school should be closed, and posted sentries until another teacher arrived. The spokesmen of Sinn Fein confess quite openly that their keenest wish is to see the Convention fail and to make it fail. At the same time, within the said Convention all the Unionist and Ulster delegates, who are to be converted to the principle of Irish unity, have a hundred more excellent reasons for looking at it with suspicion.

We now come to 1918, and as the feeling grows that the Convention is drawing to its end excitement increases. Rumour has it that the unity of

* 1 House of Commons, October 24th, 1917.

views or the spirit of conciliation, so miraculously preserved until then on subsidiary questions, has been badly shattered since the really essential problem has been under discussion, namely the national status and its exact relations with Great Britain. At this moment Sir Edward Carson left the Cabinet.

"It is, however, apparent that whatever the result of the Convention may be, its proceedings may lead to a situation demanding a decision by the Government on grave matters of policy in Ireland.

"After anxious consideration I feel certain that it will be of advantage to the War Cabinet to discuss this policy without my presence, having regard to the very prominent part which I have taken in the past in relation to the Home Rule controversy and to the pledges by which I am bound to my friends in Ulster."

Everyone congratulated him for taking this step.

On the following day, January 23rd, a bomb fell, and all the bitterness which, thanks to compulsory silence, had been dormant since the opening of the Convention, revived again. *The Times* correspondent at Washington¹ sent his newspaper

¹ This same correspondent, during the interminable exchange of Notes between Washington and our Allies on the subject of the right of blockades, of search, etc., was always putting us on our guard, with very remarkable prejudice, against the arguments of our diplomacy and invariably advised us to give in to the American point of view.

threatening warnings as to what the United States and President Wilson expected, if he were to be believed, from the Convention and the British Government.

He began by answering for the President's private views on the subject of Irish claims, by recalling the fact that he had recently accepted a little statuette commemorating the rebel Emmett (see Chapter II, p. 22), and had just given an interview with much warmth to Sheehy Skeffington's widow. He stated that the President had on several occasions brought considerable pressure to bear on Lord Bryce, and on Mr. Balfour during his tour in the States, in favour of the Nationalists. He warned us that if the Convention resulted in a fresh disappointment the interest and help of America in this war would thereby be greatly reduced (*sic*) ; that numerous Congressmen were to raise questions upon English bad feeling ; and that, counting on that to gain the Irish vote at the next elections, this competition of Republicans and Democrats would give the next Congress a large anti-English majority.

Let us hope that the correspondent exaggerated, that both elected and rulers, in spite of the impetuous enthusiasm of young countries, have enough tact and foresight to know to what point one can interfere with other people's business. This slight danger seems to be farther off to-day, and since January 1918 many facts have already enlightened our oversea friends and their President, who have

been won over to our cause so loyally. Mrs. Skeffington, when she left the White House, set to work to denounce our Alliance throughout the country, by taking up the calumnies of the late Bishop O'Dwyer, and by beseeching the Americans not to come to our help. The States learnt little by little all the outrages to the Stars and Stripes perpetrated by the mad Sinn Feiners, all the insults which Mr. de Valera and his friends hurled at the President and his Ministers. Finally the attitude of Ireland on the subject of conscription, and the recent official revelations on the direct relations between Sinn Fein and Berlin, changed the sympathy of many. The conclusion which *The Times* correspondent cabled was very simple: Ulster must yield; a minority cannot stand out against the wishes of the Irish majority. He does not seem to realise that Ulster is not a minority of the Irish people, but a separate race.

At all events the effect of this brutal dictation on the Old World was disastrous: polemics revived, British pride was roused, Ulster shook with rage, and the success of the Convention was still further compromised!

The month of March 1918 brought Ireland a double calamity—the death of Mr. Redmond and the deplorable choice of his successor.

John Redmond was behind his time; he could hardly make himself understood by his fellow-countrymen. Attached to the grand Parliamentary manner of the two most illustrious servants of

Nationalist Ireland, perhaps the only two genuine statesmen whom she has ever produced, Grattan and O'Connell; careful, as they were, of constitutional forms, of respect for order, knowing, as they did, when to bow before world-wide necessities of a higher level than national egoism, he had become almost an anachronism among his people. He marked a reaction from his immediate predecessor and from the violence of Parnell. He was able to hold the reins for some time, thanks to great tactical skill and to the substantial results which he knew so well how to extract from the English Ministers. But his methods never had the same attraction for his race as those of Parnell: Ireland ended by finding him too prudent, and sent his advice to the winds. They wanted picrate, powder and shot, and Redmond had none of those articles. His was the painful end of deserted leaders and repudiated saints.

We shall never be able to forget that he undertook and embraced our great cause spontaneously, courageously, and with perseverance, and that on the whole he risked and lost his popularity in the service of our rights.

On March 12th, 1918, the Nationalist party elected as his successor the man who was imprisoned with Parnell in 1881, Mr. John Dillon. Nothing could show better what are the present tendencies in Ireland, how Redmond's policy has failed, and what concessions must be granted in order to win popular favour once more.

Mr. John Dillon is a very outspoken man. He glories in never having taken any part in a recruiting meeting. On the morrow of the Dublin rebellion he delivered in the House of Commons, as we have seen, a panegyric on the rebels, and declared loudly that he was proud of those brave men. Redmond had at least given Ulster promises of safeguards, temporary exclusion, etc.; with Dillon there is no longer any danger that we shall suffer from illusions. I have quoted above enough of his assertions; there is no need to repeat all his speeches here, and give him more importance than he deserves.

Since his election he is engaged, as one had to expect, in trying more or less shamelessly to draw nearer to Sinn Fein. We need only be patient a little longer, and we shall soon see him throw aside the mask and cast off what little shame he still possesses.

It did not need all this to consummate the final failure of the Convention. Of what use is it to promise political toleration and fiscal equity in the name of a people who has no other ideal than terrorism?

In presenting the final report, Sir Horace Plunkett stated in the letter with which he prefaces it, "The difficulties of the Irish Convention may be summed up in two words—Ulster and Customs."

We know how firmly Ulster was prepared to oppose the Asquith scheme in 1914. In now con-

senting to confer with the Nationalist party in order to come to some arrangement which might preserve Irish unity, she certainly reckoned on more reassuring proposals than those of 1914. She was disappointed again and again by the following clauses by which, instead of concessions, she was offered fresh ultimata.

The former text had excluded from the competence of the Irish Parliament, among other matters, the army and navy, treaties, land purchase, the constabulary, and previous loans. Now the spokesmen of Ireland demanded all these. Conscription could no longer be applied without their consent—that is equivalent to saying never ; they wish to raise a territorial army in their pay and under their orders—that is very subtle ! In future they are to arbitrate without appeal on the subject of land purchase between the peasants—their constituents—and the landlords—English for the most part ; they would have the management of all the millions lent by the English who trusted in Imperial caution ; they would have all police powers—as well say impunity for their turbulent friends. The first suspicions, the first clouds have appeared on the horizon.

But the Unionist delegates were to have other shocks. Under the pretext that the island had paid too many taxes in the past (the Nationalists assume that to be a self-evident truth), she is to be exonerated from all share in the National Debt, including the debt for the Great War, which has,

however, protected Ireland as well as the rest of the Empire. Here we have finance marvellously simplified ; the Bolsheviks have made disciples !

Finally the touchstone of the whole Convention was the claim, put forward categorically and unanimously by the Nationalists, to raise Customs barriers and negotiate any commercial treaties which they chose ; “on that matter our national dignity cannot yield !” Neither could Ulster’s imperialist patriotism. From the moment that this confession was made negotiations were superfluous, and the blindest might read the hidden motives, however well-disguised.

It would take too long to reproduce here all the arguments of the two parties. Ireland maintains that her agricultural interests will never be preserved by the Customs system of an industrial Great Britain. Must we recall the fact that at present England is still a Free Trade country, and that Ireland is very prosperous under the present regime ? Her produce is at a premium, and never have her farmers handled so many banknotes. Ulster replies that she, for her part, is industrial, and that the Customs arranged by Ireland, three-quarters of which are agricultural, will not hesitate to sacrifice her interests. The pseudo-separatists had never dared in 1914 to make such a suspicious demand. If, on the contrary, Protection is wanted to reconstitute Irish industry, Ulster’s example is sufficient proof that it is quite unnecessary.

These poor creatures imagine innocently that they need only make the laws in Dublin, in order to see magnificent factories springing up everywhere, and it appears that the Americans have promised them dazzling combines. They would do well to begin by inspiring confidence in the indispensable capitalist, that bugbear of "the friends of the people." Now capital needs order and security, and it is a bad plan to start by repudiating the National Debt for a historical fad.

The Convention discussed the intrinsic merits of scores of amendments. Was it necessary ? It took as its theme colonial precedents, and demanded the status of Dominions with full fiscal autonomy. Well yes, that could be done *elsewhere*. Why does the analogy not hold good ? Because, as the report of the Ulster delegates has it, there is a preliminary question :

" We cannot overlook the strong probability that the controlling force in such a Parliament would to-day be the Republican or Sinn Fein party, which is openly and aggressively hostile to Great Britain and the Empire. During recent months in many parts of Ireland outside of Ulster there has been a great renewal of lawlessness and crime bordering on anarchy."¹

That has been said over and over again, at the risk of fatiguing the reader in an effort to prove the point ; but at bottom that is the pith of the

¹ *Report of the Convention*, p. 33.

matter. Theories are confounded by the facts. Seeing the peril of the conflict of principles on the fiscal question, Sir Horace wrote on November 6th, 1917, to the sub-committee of nine appointed to endeavour to find a basis of agreement : " To this end we must also assume—and I am sure our Ulster friends will agree to assume—that in its economic policy the Irish Parliament will be guided by common sense." The report of the Nationalist delegates asks much the same thing : " Any settlement founded on distrust of Ireland will fail in its effect."¹

That is highly probable. But when you want to win people's confidence, you should be careful not to alarm them as clumsily as did the Nationalists during the Convention.

First of all you try to have some consistency and continuity in your undertakings. On April 17th, 1918, the Municipal Council of Cork demanded a measure of Home Rule which would give satisfaction to the Irish race. There lies the rub. The history of the nineteenth century has proved that the Irish race is not easy to satisfy. After having pretended to accept a Constitution in 1914 and sworn to be satisfied with it, you should not, three years later, assert that it is ridiculous, insulting to national dignity, unacceptable by a free people, etc. . . . To-morrow, Sinn Fein, which has not chosen to lend a hand in the new structure of 1917, will hurriedly demolish it with similar arguments,

¹ *Report of the Convention*, p. 38.

and this is all the more certain that it is already stating the fact.

Then again, you do not in a deed of settlement pile up threats of friction, and a hundred ways of damaging your creditor as soon as he has renounced his due. Finally you do not go surety for the goodwill of a people which refuses to carry out its undertakings and which is engaged in giving you the lie by flagrant acts.

What security is left ? Hopes and wishes. Ulster is besought to "assume" Irish good faith, but can you ask a people to risk its fate on an assumption ? She has never been offered anything more substantial than temporary guarantees to be revised after five or ten years. So much the worse for Irish unity, but she will have none of it at that price ; she is perfectly content to belong to the British Union, and she has no wish to change masters.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSIONS AND FORECASTS

THERE is a curious contrast in this unfortunate quarrel. The Irish, dogmatically minded, do not wish sincerely for a conciliatory solution ; the English never appear to realise this, and are still under illusions which would be dangerous if Ulster did not recall them to realities.

Talk about Ireland in any London drawing-room, even at a moment when the Irish are indulging in the most outrageous lawlessness and treason, you will never hear a word of hatred, but an indulgence is shown which amazes one. John Bull even smites his breast and confesses humbly that, to tell the truth, he has never been able to govern this people. But the actual Irish mentality is so foreign to him that he still dreams of being able to arrange matters by logic and common sense. He often says to you, and believes it, that everything will settle itself, the Irish cannot really be as unreasonable as they say.

Sometimes the English go the greatest lengths in making concessions in order to reach a compromise, but there must be two to make a bargain. Read leading articles in the big newspapers,

speeches of party leaders, books by the best critics, and you will see that the subject always closes on an optimistic note. This confidence in the future, in spite of what has gone before, seems rather forced when one has just considered the long and troublesome history of Irish obstinacy and paradox. Like Ulster, I for one do not share it.

Sir Horace Plunkett, in presenting his report to the Prime Minister, closes his letter with these words :

"The Convention has therefore laid a foundation of Irish agreement unprecedented in history. . . . Notwithstanding the difficulties with which we were surrounded, a larger measure of agreement has been reached upon the principles and details of Irish self-government than has ever yet been attained."

It is very misleading. One can understand that Sir Horace should wish to feel that he had not worked in vain ; but in spite of all the respect which his intentions and loyalty deserve, one must admit that his own summary does not justify such conclusions. The Convention had not to obtain England's consent to Home Rule, for that had already been given subject to certain safeguards and the exclusion of Ulster. But on the other hand it had to convert Ulster to the new dogma of Irish Unity ; instead of which it made her more suspicious and more hostile than ever by justifying all her suspicions. Can one say under

these circumstances that they were any nearer coming to an understanding ?

This is a brief analysis of the final vote of the Convention. On April 5th, 1918, there were ninety delegates; forty-four voted for the Report—that is, less than half. All the Catholic Bishops present voted against it, as also did Mr. Devlin, M.P., and Mr. W. Murphy, whose influence is considerable. Among the forty-four there were eleven Southern Unionists; Lord Midleton has since recanted in their name, asserting that in view of the ill-feeling now paramount in Ireland no Unionist would now venture to attempt Home Rule. The forty-four also included a certain number of Nationalist Chairmen of County Councils; their own Press now treats them as “defeatists” for having appeared to grant concessions, and Sinn Fein has undertaken to punish them by making them lose their seats. Seven of them have already been removed by these means in two months. An eighth was only enabled to keep his place by a casting vote—his own. Let us therefore subtract eleven Unionists and seven delegates who have been disowned and reduced to silence: there remain twenty-six signatories of the Report as against twenty-nine opponents. Can we call that a substantial agreement and reckon upon it in future legislation ?

Besides, of what consequence are these consultations of legislators and theorists ? what does it matter if they are agreed if their supporters never

ratify their signature ? These men answer for no one, it will be said, they do not represent Ireland. John Redmond was "answerable" for Ireland ; what notice was taken of his leading principles ? Who, then, represents Ireland ? That recalls to my mind a correspondent in *The Times* who wished to show indulgence to the nation and not judge it by this class or that ; according to him no notice should be taken of these mistaken people who did not represent the true Ireland—pretentious, half-educated artisans, idle, quarrelsome young men, shop girls led away to sedition by sentimentalism, sincere enthusiasts. . . . But if you choose, sincere enthusiasts may mean a whole nation. Add to these politicians of every calibre, from town and country, priests, teachers, publicans, etc. . . . What is there left ?

What have we to do with all this ? and does it concern us Frenchmen ?

Ireland was one of the first to bring forward her claims as an international question ; she has therefore given us the right to judge her. She has made great capital out of, and reaped many benefits from foreign sympathies, and she can hardly complain if we ask to verify her title-deeds and her references.

Above all, in this matter of foreign sympathies, the Irish are very proud of the support of their American and colonial cousins. At bottom, the fact that the Irish in Australia or America espouse the quarrel of their former home is too natural and would not have any great moral importance,

if all that did not add fresh fuel to the fire of legends and mystification. Thus when American Cardinals appeal to our pity for " Irish distress " which no longer exists, it is as well to put our people on their guard.

On his return from a tour among his oversea compatriots, Mr. T. P. O'Connor, the Nationalist member, raised this cry of alarm : " Never was feeling more bitter—I might almost say so frenzied and anti-English among my countrymen in America as it is now."

That may be so ; but nothing justifies it ; it is hallucination, pure and simple, or blind hatred ; and if that is to be perpetuated one would despair not only of the famous League of Nations, but of the common sense of humanity.

But though they are numerous and influential, there are other people besides Irishmen in the United States. I might almost go so far as to say that all the Irish there are not so mad.

But apart from sentiment one often hears over there quite unfounded statements on Irish matters. The American whom Erin calls as a witness at every other moment genuinely believes, or did believe, all the fables about Ireland being oppressed, exploited, enslaved, etc. He is equally mistaken about the remedies to be applied, as *The Times* proved by its inquiry in April 1917. The replies of all the people interviewed have the same refrain : the Irish question *must* be settled ! They do not say how, or else—which is not worth

much more—they think that by some magic formula they can sweep away obstacles which are centuries old and cannot be got over. Some ignore Ulster completely, others assert light-heartedly that she must submit. Many of them borrow analogies from their own history and their own American Constitution like the following :

“ Why does England object to give Ireland satisfaction ? Did our Union suffer by leaving each State its own legislature ? ”

Then what about federalism ? In England, too, one hears a great deal about federalism in a certain school which finds in it a panacea for an overgrown body. The word is very fashionable, but the thing itself is ill-defined ; the newspapers are filled with letters from zealous persons pointing out the urgency of this reform which is as vague as it is indispensable according to them, which will settle every vexed question, beginning with Ireland. Of what use is it to indulge in this chimera ? It shows complete misunderstanding of the demands of Nationalist Ireland. What Sinn Fein and even Dillon want is not that, it is integral separation, the very secession of which the United States has such a poignant memory.

“ We cannot admit the separation of Ulster from Ireland any more than we could consent to detach South Carolina from our Union.”

Then, why wish to detach Ireland from her present Union ? There would be a much closer ana-

logy in the example of Virginia. When this State decided on May 23rd, 1861, to secede from the Union, the districts situated to the west of the Alleghany Mountains refused to have anything to do with this separation, and claimed the right to form a new and distinct State, Western Virginia, which was officially admitted to the Union in June 1863. Has not Ulster got in that a very formidable precedent ?

“ Ulster’s fears are hysterical and ridiculous. Our Southerners were afraid, too, that they would be oppressed by the North, and see how mistaken they were.”

You might as well compare Dillon to Lincoln ! Lincoln, whose memory is now revered by all democracies.

Those who want conciliation at any price all say precisely the same thing to Ulster : “ You are wrong to be alarmed, to look too much to the past, to nurse your jealous hatred, etc. . . . ” It is word for word what we have been reproaching Nationalist Ireland for doing, but with this difference : the wrongs of Ireland have disappeared, the damage has been made good, the debts have been paid ; those of Ulster are unfortunately in the present and yet to come—only too much so. If the people of Belfast wished to forget past history, they would have daily reminders in the words and deeds of the Irish of 1914, 1916, and 1918. Can we blame them for seeing therein more threats than promises ?

Moreover, the Americans since they have become our Allies, and have had to suffer with us from the ill-timed jests of the Irish, begin to see matters in a clearer light. For the last year there have been various little ill-omened incidents, insults to President Wilson, the Stars and Stripes trampled in the mud, and so on. Uncle Sam was not expecting anything of that sort, and he is beginning to ask himself at last if England really is the guilty party or whether Ireland is simply cross-grained and ungovernable. I believe that he is getting nearer to the truth and that soon the Martyred Isle will have one dupe the less.

When a few more Americans have passed through Ireland, when there have been a few troops in camp, when the boys from New Jersey have seen this poor tragedy queen a little closer at hand, we may be certain of one thing ; they will soon change their opinions of the tales told by their Cardinals or Tammany's electoral agents. They will see Ireland petted and cosseted, rather foolishly exempted by England from all the burdens of the war, even from the small food and other restrictions which all the Allies have had to impose upon themselves. The little colleen with the red shawl and green skirt has become the spoilt child of her stepmother ; no conscription, no increase in railway fares,¹ no stoppage of race meetings, no limit on petrol, and so on. While their mothers in

¹ In Ireland these were increased by 50 per cent. in May 1918, while in England this was done two years before.

Boston and Chicago are rationing themselves voluntarily in order to help us to stand fast, they will see Sinn Fein forbidding farmers to export pigs or butter to England. In short, they will see that when they were told that Ireland was to be pitied they were told lies.

When the Irish try, in spite of all, to make them believe it still, they will ask themselves as we have : what can be done to satisfy people like this ? Neither England nor anybody else will ever satisfy Ireland. Recrimination has become second nature and she plays the martyr with consummate art, without realising that we have already seen the performance and that her acting impresses us less in consequence. "The best way to overcome pain," said one of the Fathers of the Church, "is not to love it." Go and say that to Ireland, take away her halo and deprive her of the profit she makes out of it ! Ireland is in distress out of habit.

The gentle poet Edmund Spenser said it to her three hundred years ago in these prophetic lines : "Marry, there have been divers good plots devised and wise counsels cast already about the reformation of that realm ; but they say it is the fatal destiny of that land that no purposes whatsoever which are meant for her good, will prosper and take good effect."

The English, who are so fortunate and so skilful in their other colonies, have often been reproached with their failure in this case. But does not the

very fact that they have succeeded everywhere else show that they are not primarily responsible for the Irish muddle ? Matthew Arnold used to complain of this British habit, according to him the most serious obstacle to the good fellowship of the two islands—that of adopting a conventional point of view, of being satisfied with it and instantly expecting others to be satisfied with it likewise. That may be : but why not apply that to Ireland ? Why sacrifice the principles and practices of Government which have been proved satisfactory in an immense Empire with most diverse races, in the greatest administrative experiment which has ever been made ? Why sacrifice the mature political experience of 40,000,000 Anglo-Saxons and Scots to the paradoxes of 3,500,000 Irish ? As for knowing whether they are paradoxes, and where common sense is to be found, I leave that to the reader to judge after what he has just read.

L. G. Redmond-Howard is pleased to quote a remark by W. T. Stead, the celebrated journalist since drowned in the *Titanic* disaster : “ We have made every mistake possible as a ruling race in Ireland. We shall never keep our Empire by force like Ireland.” True, the British Empire does not depend upon its heavy artillery, and that is the very reason why the Germans, short-sighted psychologists that they are, never could understand its solidity. Stead might have spared himself the trouble of giving England this piece of

advice, for she has wisely acted on this principle for more than a century—since her misfortune with America and the stern lessons learnt from George Washington. Then why has Ireland still to be periodically broken in? Because other methods—has not everything been tried?—come to nothing, because madmen cannot be tamed.

Let us take one case out of a thousand. Ten years ago the Irish were moaning because they had no recognised Catholic University. They wanted one which should be both free as regards its teaching and subsidised by that enemy whose money alone is acceptable to them. They were given what they asked. The consequences were predicted by men who were at that time accused of religious or political intolerance, but whose forecasts were soon realised: the National University is the most dangerous hotbed of conspiracies, revolts, of the whole seditious propaganda. Many of its professors are section leaders of Sinn Fein; Professor MacNeill divides his time between lectures on the Gaelic language and manuals of tactics, fortification, and so on for the use of the rebels. The students who leave the National University sow the seeds of rebellion, and, since the instruction of the whole nation is in their hands, the harvest will be rich; in the national schools of Ireland, small and great, primary or secondary, nothing is taught but hatred, hatred, and yet more hatred.

Mr. Redmond had described eloquently the

benefits of a higher education which, while respecting religious scruples, would create more enlightened and more law-abiding ruling classes. Cassandra shrugged her shoulders and laughed . . . and Cassandra was right.

Before accepting the Chief Secretaryship of Ireland, Mr. Duke said to his electors at Exeter : “ Only two courses are open—coercion or an amicable agreement.”¹

And in spite of the disaster of his immediate predecessor, Mr. Birrell, he wanted to venture upon showing more leniency, release the prisoners, moderate stringent police regulations, shut his eyes to the agitation of the Irish. That lasted for two years, a last respite to calm Nationalist fever—and here we are in delirium, worse than ever. Mr. Duke had to be replaced by Field-Marshal Lord French and martial law had to be rigidly enforced.

We are still far from Home Rule ! First of all, the state of feeling in which it would have now to be applied would, with the best intentions, make its failure certain. *The Daily News* in June 1918 wrote : “ The election of a Home Rule Parliament now is practically impossible from the point of view of British statesmanship, because it would create a Parliament with an overwhelming *separatist* majority. Such a Parliament would have to be dissolved almost as soon as it began to sit.”

Then again, if British statesmen and public

¹ July 15th, 1916.

opinion have been very indulgent and very generous towards Ireland for the last fifty years, the way in which they have been rewarded will bring us once more to the inevitable and recurrent reaction. The Irish have never tried to conciliate England, but have exasperated her, and in spite of that, her self-denial, raising her above petty considerations, has led her to adopt altruistic courses, and to sacrifice many of her own interests in order to appease Celtic neurosis. So little was needed to obtain from England Home Rule in Ireland as elsewhere, since she has granted it so sensibly to her young Dominions—not even gratitude, only a little tact and common sense. She has never been given anything but hatred in return for what she has done.

Concessions are refused, victory is desired ; Irish hatred demands a victim and has had wild schemes for undermining the columns of the magnificent Imperial structure. Now the best and surest way to hurt England to-day is to join hands with the hateful brood whose way she bars, and whose foul debauchery she stamps underfoot. Ireland did not hesitate ; she threw herself into those bloody arms with the same ardour as the paralytic of Constantinople and the loathsome Ferdinand of Bulgaria. She is at liberty to find her ideal there, but it is for us to guard our own, the ideal of Right and Justice, written with capitals. It is for us to see what that Irish victory would signify tomorrow if it were helped by our sympathy : after

the following confessions we should be foolish indeed if we were to err in the matter.

Since the war a Germano-Irish Society has been founded at Berlin, under the august patronage of the Chancellor von Bethmann-Hollweg; we can guess its aim and its disinterested motives. It has three Presidents, including von Schorlemer, the Prussian Minister of Agriculture, and Dr. Kuno Meyer, former Professor at Dublin University, who initiates it into the mysteries of Celtic Kultur and into the gloomy beauties of Gaelic folklore. It is all very innocent. But as the secret funds of the Auswärtiges Amt are not frittered away in trifles, the Society devotes itself to more fruitful applications of Weltpolitik. According to the *Kölnische Zeitung* it dispatched in March 1918 some edifying telegrams.

To Hindenburg the superman :

" Filled with the conviction that a free Ireland, independent of England, will guarantee the freedom of the seas, and thereby the liberation of the world from English sea-tyranny, we hope for a strong German peace, which can alone create real guarantees for Germany and for Ireland."

To the pious Count Hertling :

" The independence of Ireland is the real guarantee for the freedom of the seas from the Anglo-Saxon yoke—the freedom which is longed for unanimously, not only by the whole German people, but by all peoples."¹

¹ *The Times*, March 15th, 1918, "Through German Eyes."

A few days later, on St. Patrick's day, the Society gave a banquet at the Hotel Adlon, and the Wilhelmstrasse sent as its representative one Herr von Stumm, who made a long speech on the theme of the above telegrams. When Admiral von Hintze took office after Kühlmann's hurried retirement, he promised the same "liberation" in his famous confidence to the ex-Khedive: chivalrous Germany is fighting only to save those two oppressed sisters, Egypt and Ireland, from England's grasp!

After these official benedictions, we know henceforth what to expect of what Germany means by the independence of Ireland. It is more than enough to justify the chief argument of Anglo-Irish Unionists, the strategic argument. It is no longer very fashionable, I know; men prefer the idealism of the platform, Bolshevik candour, or the angelic formula of the Reichstag, "no annexations, no indemnities." It is no longer admitted that any people should be allowed to exist under a yoke of which it disapproves. Granted. But there is such a thing as a right to legitimate self-defence for nations as for individuals, and for great nations as well as for small.

Let us suppose that England renounces her historical rights, her prescriptive titles, and lawful sovereignty. Let us suppose the impossible, that Ireland consents to the exclusion of Ulster. She would not be content for long with self-government under Imperial supremacy; she would at once demand absolute separation: we know it,

she has said so often enough and proved it by repudiating those who brought her Home Rule at last.

This absolute separation is inadmissible, and why? Because Ireland would be an intolerable menace to the neighbouring island. An economic menace; we have lately seen her Customs schemes. A military menace; Germany and Sinn Fein will see to that.

At the close of the Congress of Friends of Irish Liberty at New York, John Devoy, one of those heroes or martyrs to whom the municipal councils of Ireland send moving addresses every year, a former dynamiter and gaol-bird, stated that Ireland would continue to threaten the British Empire as long as there was a British Empire—and that would not be long.

That was said quite recently, May 19th, 1918. When a people has such wild men as spokesmen and refuses to contradict them—far from that, loads them with honours—when an Empire hears itself threatened in this manner, can you wonder that stern measures are taken? So much the worse for the principle of nationalities! If you go to Dublin you will read at the foot of Parnell's monument: "No man has a right to fix the boundary to the march of a nation. No man has a right to say to his country: thus far shalt thou go and no farther. We have never attempted to fix the *ne plus ultra* to the progress of Irish nationhood, and we never shall." Treitschke, Bernhardi, William II, could not improve upon that.

No right to fix a boundary ? I beg your pardon, my poor friend, the right of neighbours, the right of Ulster, the security of Great Britain and that Empire which you stand on your honour to threaten. Your formula is a lie—we ourselves—you must change that, you are not the only people in the world, and great Empires have the right occasionally to the same safeguards as a small nation which is too infuriated and too aggressive.

All Irish Nationalism is vitiated by these two emanations—a hateful spite which will never be satisfied without England's humiliation, and a ruthless egoism.

Ah ! that egoism ! in its very title Sinn Fein glories in it. It has two corollaries : astonishing vanity, and crass ignorance of all outside matters. Just as in the fifth century she conceived the monastic regime, so now Ireland still delights to live in a moral seclusion. Roman Catholic discipline, ever intent upon avoiding the slightest contact with heresy in any of its forms, men, ideas, or institutions, has given hearty support to this isolation. When pronouncing a panegyric upon the too famous O'Dwyer, Monsignor Fogarty, Bishop of Killaloe, thinking that he was paying the highest tribute to his vindictive colleague, said : “ For him there was only one country in the world, and that was Ireland—no lakes, no mountains, no people as grand as hers. He never took a vacation outside her shores ; he never wore a suit of clothes that was

not made in Ireland, and if possible in Limerick."

Truly, that explains somewhat narrow views on world-events ! This is the man who presumed to criticise the diplomacy of Downing Street. Erin lives too much aloof, geographically and morally, "on the edge of beyond." She battens too much on her bitter memories and national hallucinations, on her history falsified by fanaticism and intolerance. She does not control her auto-suggestions ; points of comparison are missing ; like the Bishop of Limerick she prefers to ignore the other world, our world. But to add to her folly, and this is where her vanity comes in, she thinks that the eyes of the whole world are on her, admiring her, pitying her, applauding her. What would you ? All her orators tell her so.

Vanity ! We are told that towards the end of the rebellion of 1916, in a village near Dublin, Swords, two hundred Sinn Feiners, barricaded in an old convent, wanted to surrender. Unfortunately so little notice had been taken of their heroism until then that there was no one to receive their submission except two local policemen. Mortified at the idea of going through the village under this escort, our warriors themselves telephoned to the nearest barracks to demand a respectable force, and two hours later the two hundred were able to march between two dozen genuine bayonets : national pride was saved.

Ireland to-day is flattering her vanity by another

bright idea: she thinks she is the ulcer which is eating into the old British carcass. Apparently that consoles her completely for the loss of many friendships of which she was proud. People take their happiness where they can, but the poor creature is mistaken once again. Is John Bull not in good form, looking very healthy, and more vigorous than ever? Has he a malignant tumour? Nonsense—nothing more than a wart.

What is going to happen now? Let us beware of official orations whose perorations are always so sickly sweet. Here is a choice specimen—Mr. Shortt is speaking, the new Chief Secretary for Ireland: “These are all German plots. . . . Ireland—I mean the great true heart of the Irish people—is not responsible for what the Germans do and is not responsible for what the two or three hundred extremists in Ireland do. Ireland I believe is sound at the core to-day.”

You would hardly believe, as you read this, that the most authoritative spokesmen and the most effective representatives of the people, the national clergy, led by their bishops, had, not a month before, forbidden conscription to the faithful from the pulpits; offering for this beautiful “intention” a Mass as solemn as it was blasphemous in all churches on April 21st, 1918, a Mass followed by a great collective oath in the presence of the Holy Sacrament; collecting every Sunday funds for resistance, and advising their

terrorised flocks "under penalties of eternal damnation to resist conscription to the uttermost."¹

¹ Official statement by Lord Curzon in the name of the Government, House of Lords, June 20th, 1918. Here are some quotations in defence of his statement published in his letter to *The Times* and *Morning Post* of June 27th, 1918 :

"On Sunday, April 21st, 1918, at a meeting after Mass at Castletownbere, held to protest against conscription, the Rev. Charles Brennan, C.C., said they should resist it, that they should all approach the sacraments and be ready to die in their resistance, and that dying in their resistance they would die with the full blessing of God and the Church upon them. If they (the police) enforced it the people should kill them the same as they would kill any man who would attempt to take away from them their lives, and that the police had no right to their lives if they came to arrest any Irishman under the Conscription Act. . . . If the soldiers did attempt to enforce conscription they should be treated in the same way as the police. When the police and military would die in enforcing the Act—as die they would should they attempt to enforce it—they would die enemies of God, whilst the people would die at peace with God and under His blessing and that of the Church.

"On April 21st, 1918, the Rev. Father Lynch, addressing the congregation in Ryehill Roman Catholic Church, said 'Do ye resist conscription by every means in your power; any minion of the English Government who shoots one of you, especially if he is a Roman Catholic, is guilty of mortal sin, and God will cry to Heaven for vengeance.'

"On April 21st, 1918, the Rev. Father Murphy, C.C., addressing the congregation in Kilgarvan Roman Catholic Chapel, said that any Irishman who assisted the Government to enforce conscription in Ireland, as well as being a traitor to his country, is morally committing a sin against the law of God.

"On April 21st, 1918, the Rev. James McInerney, at Mass, Scarriff, said : 'No Roman Catholic Irishman, no matter what position he held, could assist in the enforcement of conscription in this country without being a renegade to his faith.'

"On April 21st, 1918, the Rev. Father Donnelly Murrough said : 'Those who were the means of enforcing it were guilty

For instance, the constable or policeman who wanted to arrest a shirker, or who posted up a recruiting list, would be damned. Do not smile ; 95 per cent. of the Irish police are Roman Catholics and have to respect these priests of theirs.

Sir Edward Carson replied to Mr. Shortt :

" My right honourable friend looks forward with great hopes to the settlement of Ireland during his regime. I earnestly hope that he may

of a mortal sin because they had no legal right to put such an Act in force against the wishes of the Irish people.'

" On April 28th, 1918, Father O'Callaghan after Mass, Killyclogher, said : ' If any conscription is enforced, any policeman who assists in any way in enforcing it is guilty of murder and can never get absolution.'

" On April 28th, 1918, Father Murphy, at Divine Service at Killenena Roman Catholic Church, said : ' On last Sunday I asked the police to throw off their jackets from a moral point of view as they were Nationalists and Irishmen with the same Irish blood through their veins, but to-day I ask them from a spiritual point of view to do so, because all Irishmen are asked by the Irish Hierarchy not to do anything to facilitate conscription, and that if any policeman went out to force Irishmen to join the English army and was shot when doing so, he would be damned in hell, even though he may be in the state of grace that morning.'

" The Rev. Gerald Dennehy, C.C., of Eyries, County Cork, told about three hundred men who received the sacrament in his chapel that any Catholic policeman or agent of the Government who assisted in putting conscription in force would be excommunicated and cursed by the Roman Catholic Church ; the curse of God would follow them in every land ; and he asked his hearers to kill them at sight ; they would be blessed by God, and this would be the most acceptable sacrifice that could be offered."

Is it surprising that *The Times* asked if that was indeed the mission of the Catholic clergy ?

succeed. It has been the aspiration of innumerable Chief Secretaries who have long since been forgotten.” (Laughter!) ¹

Optimism by order—chaff before the wind. Do not let us be led away any more by ministerial rhetoric.

Now just hold your head and try to resolve this conundrum, and tell me how you could dare to reckon upon the settlement of Ireland? In view of the physical impossibility of applying conscription, the Government promised through Lord French, the new Viceroy, that every Irish volunteer would be given a holding of land on his return home. Now the land of Ireland is already claimed by farmers and tenants. We know the ideas the countryfolk hold as to their right of occupation, their bad feeling, etc.; they would not stand being supplanted and replaced by rivals, the land belongs to them. In France we have seen the most amenable peasant grow fierce in similar cases. In Ireland, where men are violent by nature, we must add to this contention, which is common to all countries, the effect of a whole century of agrarian agitation and organised crimes, of which we have said quite enough elsewhere. If there is one matter which the Irish do take seriously, that is the one.

The farmers' sons are the very people who will not fight; the farmers will not have their sons taken at any price, for they treasure them jealously

¹ House of Commons, June 25th, 1918.

as heirs presumptive to Irish soil, soon to benefit by land purchase, with the alluring fruits of the promised land almost within their grasp. Are these fruits to be snatched from them to be given away? And given to whom? To those whom national opinion has sworn to execrate, and to pay out; to those hateful renegades, "traitors to Ireland," who have gone to serve the cause of hell; to those wretches in khaki who were shot remorselessly, like rats, with contempt and disgust, in the streets of Dublin on Easter Monday, 1916.

Does it seem only fair to you, reader, that those who volunteered for the war should be rewarded? Ah, you do not understand Irish logic. . . . Are you possibly as stupid as the Britons who never understand Ireland?

But have patience, you will soon learn to know her. Let them but come to take their blood-money, these unspeakable creatures, new land-thieves, after the manner of Cromwell's soldiers, and the Irish will soon let them know of what stuff they are made. The thatched roofs will be set alight as if by magic (for magic plays a large part in Celtic superstition), the small-holder's cow will stray mysteriously into a bog-hole on some fine moonlight night. That will last for fifty years if necessary, but it shall not be said that one man disabled in the great war will have stolen with impunity their rights from our honest farmers' sons.

Peace in Ireland ? Let us hope for it—but do not let us be so fatuous as to count much on it. Let us be prepared for fatal but natural reaction. Will the mark be overstepped ? Possibly, and after what we have just read the English must be somewhat excused if they lose their calm. We know that they never do so unless provocations are excessive, but how should we like to hear chuckles of delight in our rear at every reverse while we were weeping for our glorious dead ? We should see red—and John Bull has a heart the same as we have.

Will Ulster become more confirmed in her intolerance towards her Roman Catholic neighbours ? It is unfortunate, but has she not been given the best of reasons for being so ? She has never seen around her the best side of the Roman hierarchy, the priests and bishops whom she knows and hears are shameless inciters to sedition, daily compromising their spiritual mission in order to serve blind passions or the interests of the parish pump.

And as for political solutions properly so-called, which innumerable Chief Secretaries pursue with such touching constancy according to the exigencies of their office, I reckon nothing to them either. Do you call this a negative conclusion, obstructionist, sterile ? I know it full well, but one has sometimes to take a negative view knowingly. I do not believe in a peaceable solution of the Irish problem, and I have stated my reasons over and over again. The Irish want reparation for coloni-

sation carried out in the distant past upon a race which was then backward and brutish, but which has since developed ; reparation means abolition of the fruits of colonisation, and the expulsion of the colonists, or, which would be worse, submission to the natives. This raises the question of the legitimacy of colonisation throughout the whole world. It is impossible. Do not let us seek for the impossible.

But for all that the Irish question will remain an acute and ever-present problem. It will certainly continue to be one of the favourite trump cards of English political parties, and a century hence someone will probably repeat Lord Rosebery's aphorism, "The Irish question has never passed into history because it has never passed out of politics."¹

English Governments will still try to content Ireland with Home Rule in one form or another, with which no one will be satisfied. The combination will never last, especially if they try to make an explosive mixture the danger of which Ulster has already scented. Perhaps one day at some moment when nerves are soothed and passions slumbering, if the Almighty ever permits such a thing to occur in Ireland, they will manage to deceive each other, flout Ulster or extract more serious safeguards from the Nationalists. But how long would you expect that to last ? With such temperaments there can be only one issue—civil war, inevitably.

¹ *Pitt, chapter xi.*

Or perhaps they will contrive, as a result of the events of the last ten years, to come to the following *modus vivendi*.

Give Home Rule to Roman Catholic Ireland. Exclude the north-east of Ulster. Define clearly military, economic, and political safeguards, without which the Empire cannot exist, or she will go to her doom. Ireland would be dissatisfied with this regime, that I need hardly say. There will be nothing to be done but let her howl. She will then attempt another rising—and perhaps she will have to be brought to reason more or less harshly, more or less brutally. She will howl louder than ever.

Then we shall remember what we have just read, we shall know where our sympathies should go, we shall take care not to misplace or prostitute them once again.

If it be true that the policy of Great Britain in Ireland is incoherent it is partly our fault. If English Governments hesitate so long before showing the iron hand, or only make up their minds to do so when it is too late, it is because they have been looking too much our way, too careful of what we might say, too anxious about our criticisms. They have not all Pitt's power and fine moral assurance; and then the English Radicals, having interfered with other people's business a great deal in the nineteenth century, have nowadays to submit to this counterblast. Their hands are no longer free; they are afraid

of upsetting our ill-informed public opinion, and of getting oversea Irishmen on their shoulders—1,000,000 in Australia, 1,000,000 in Canada, 16,000,000 in the United States—very influential in those young republics whose susceptibilities Old England is so anxious—and rightly so—not to offend. As Wu Ting Fang, the former Chinese ambassador at Washington, used to say, “The only two countries in the world where I should like to live are China and Ireland : they are the only two countries where the Irish do not rule.” English Ministers have been obliged to take it into account, and their Irish policy has often been warped by it.

Let us then enlighten our public opinion, and do not let us be taken in any more in the future. England will one day have, very unwillingly, to call for her lictors and restore order : Pax Britannica ! Do not let us add to her worries by encouraging with our pity those fraudulent beggars who do not deserve it.

Perhaps the opportunity will come very soon, if it is decided to hear England’s cause at the Peace Conference after the cries of distress of other small nationalities. We will begin by reminding her of what Casement said to his countrymen : “ Irishmen . . . you have fought for Belgium in England’s interest, though it was no more to you than the Fiji Islands.”

That can be turned round.

On which side of the green table will Erin take

her place ? Her new motto, translated into good Gaelic by Kuno Meyer, would seem to give us the clue :

“A Dhia saor Eirinnagus Almain ! God save Ireland and Germany !”

Which God ? William the Second’s old God ? Much good may he do them. Let those cronies disentangle their intrigue, and do not let us undertake the job. The Irish reserve their right to fight for their national ideal. But an ideal which includes an alliance with Germany and remains deaf to all the great altruisms of our cause does not seem to us greatly to be recommended.

That chatterbox Meyer, in a speech at Cologne, last April, promised Germany’s gratitude to Ireland for her hostility to England during the war, thus immobilising an army, partly in Ireland, partly in England, in view of Irish risings. The German professor spoke the truth, and we have neither to rejoice over the matter nor to thank Ireland : she tried to stab us in the back—John Redmond’s words—and it would be intolerable if she were to profit thereby.

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